

# SONNETS

James Vila Blake

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# SONNETS

James Vila Blake

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CHICAGO

1898

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

TO A RADIANCE OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE, OF SUNNY QUAIN  
CHEERFULNESS, BRAVE CONSTANCY AND WOMANLY  
WISDOM, CLOTHED WITH THE  
NAME OF

CLARA HAMILTON MAHONY



I dedicate to thee this little book:  
Thou knowest 'tis the coining of my heart—  
To me most costly gold. Reading 's thy part;  
But less with eyes than with thy love to look.  
Here there be things that run like any brook,  
Babbling with joy; and here it is the art  
Of artless song to count the tears that start  
From Memory's eyes, revisiting a nook  
Of vanished love. O friend, the precious things  
That were, and now are not; yet dearer more  
That were not once, but now shall be for aye.  
Therefore my verse not false but faithful sings:  
If sad sometimes, yet like to glistening ore,  
Deep in its black reflecting golden day.

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A LETTER.



## A LETTER.

*Beloved Friends :*

*Much was I perplexed for a while how I might say all I wished to you and yet escape the critic's performing and the noise of his populace who answer his "Plaudite." For I was determined to write to you with all my freedom, if I could, and was willing to suffer somewhat for it if I pleased you still more; yet I shrank, if I must confess so much, from bringing into our company such as know neither you nor me, but are ready to "smile a little smile" ('tis so one of them expressed herself to me—see Sonnet lxxxvii) at some forgetful touch of nature or fluency of taste. Therefore I was at a stand, as I have said, how I could unfold me to you as my heart would, yet avoid the arching eyebrows of the cold, the too knowing, the gathered-up, the measured-off, every manner of "unco' guid"—in short, all kinds of the unacquainted. Suddenly it occurred to me that I could make an edition of my book specially for you, not to be sold, and in this I could say what I would in this letter and in notes not to be put in the edition for the shops; and then I enlarged my hopes to the making of a better and large-paper edition for you, which I have done, limiting it to two hundred and twenty-five numbered and autograph copies, a love-offering to you; in which alone I print this letter and*

the "Notes for my Friends." Herein surely I am secure; for in private talk with my friends I may say what I please, and "'tis nobody's business" but yours and mine.

As to the critics, one may avoid them in the same way as one may hold a boar in small esteem, yet must consider to escape his tusks; for however little respectable the animal, his teeth may score tender flesh all the same. "The bullying omniscience" of the gentry called critics is such an amazing thing as passes beyond the bounds wherein surprise is a pleasure—unless indeed we suspect that however solemn a face they keep to the public, they make merry over their craft among themselves. Here shoots in memory a pleasant story of them to "point the moral." I have heard that the Editor of "The Literary Heavens," unbending and descending from his stool for a vacation, appointed a worthy man to his seat while he went fishing. The substitute having soon a book to review, and finding a place therein about which he was in some doubt, and being new to the craft and not yet rich in its manners, ingenuously confessed his uncertainty, saying that the matter appeared to him so and so, but yet he had some hesitation and would not be understood to speak too assuredly. This article, of uncommon and unwelcome flavor, coming to the chief in his skiff, he lost all taste for fishing for that day, and on his return expressed his wrath to his substitute thus: "Sir, if ever again I leave you in charge of this paper, you will please remember that, however ignorant you may be as an individual, as Editor of

*'The Literary Heavens' you know everything.'* For my book itself, these omniscient folk, that foot Olympus jauntily, may have their will of it with small concern to me. It is not such writing as they are used to, and I should not expect the barnyard of the present time to have fowl in it that like aught but their accustomed mash. Flint corn is out of date. 'Tis too much for the crops of our critic-fowl of present henneries. And even if they were pleased with me, why should I reckon of that? It were foolish, inconsistent, insincere, to value praise where I am indifferent to blame. It is not unseldom a sadness to become the fashion. If humbly and earnestly any one hath aimed purely at a pure simplicity, belike he may be driven sometimes to repeat an old poet's words, "It is as great a spite to be praised in the wrong place and by a wrong person as can be done to a noble nature."

Wherefore for the book itself I take no thought; but I would not have these busy-bodies, these Parnassian fringes, feast around my confidences; and if one of these special volumes, not for sale nor in any manner offered to them, shall fall under a critic's observation, he will be overweening if he complain of what never was intended for his acquaintance and has no pretension to invite or entertain him. Let the critic-steeds (if you will permit me another figure) paw the ring and prance and arch their necks around my book itself—as they will, if possibly they become aware of me at all, seeing a way by being aware of me to make others aware of them and know what smart things they can neigh and what snorts let fly

from fiery nostrils. But if they busy themselves with the notes, or with this letter, which are for you alone, beloved friends, they will be no better than cart-backs that have broken a fence to forage in a garden, though the fence by its presence hath said plainly, "Cart-backs, keep out."

These things I say not because I despise the science of Criticism. To condemn a fine and excellent branch of learning because of pretenders who tramp noisily in the borders of it, were as foolish and pinched-up with vanity replacing thought, as these gossips are. There be critics (a few,—even belike more rare than poets, for what reason I know not) who are noble expounders of still nobler works. But these are men of thought. The critics whose loud buzz and small poison I would escape, are like "insect miseries" which have no real direction, but alight anywhere as it may happen. I will offer an example, the first at hand. In a critical article on the biography of Tennyson by his son, I find it said:

"He [Tennyson] was in the habit of reading his poems aloud, beautifully and impressively, and also of 'explaining' them. Now, we are of those who hold that to 'explain' a poem to one who does not instinctively understand it, is like explaining a rose to a person devoid of sight or smell—a useless and perfunctory effort."

O monstrum horrendum! Res illotis manibus oblata. I rather would meet a senseless brute, though fierce, than this human folly, to offer me somewhat with no preparation, no real thinking thereon,—a jaunty toss to my table of a raw bit which serves no better for mental diet than



*in any other cookery, the author holding himself above the office of cook meanwhile, but serving me all the same his uncomposed mess. With what a superior smile doth he launch himself! With what a fine pity for the less exalted! But who is this fellow, I would say, that is so pleased with himself against a master's enjoyment in discoursing of the meanings which he hath compacted in the compressions of verse or clothed in "the purple and fine linen" of poetic forms? Thus he proceeds:*

*"Imagine Robert Browning sitting down to explain himself. Apart from the inherent impossibilities of the task, his sense of the humorous would interdict it."*

*Metbinks Browning would have done naught very humorous if he had vouchsafed a note here and there at some length. But our critic's tipped chin, that is humorous in the double sense thereof. Hath his Sir-Oracle Criticism ever pondered over "The Ancient Mariner," or "Childe Roland," or Sonnets of Angelo? Hath he met the questions that hang about Macbeth or Hamlet or Faust? Hath he known Grove's book on "The Nine Symphonies of Beethoven," or the multiple hosts of like expounders of great works of art? Or doth he conceive a bare philosophy is to be reasoned and explained, but a noble art-work hath no like thought-deep? Is he ignorant that Dante disdained not to explain his own Sonnets? Or that Tasso is said to have "admired Casa so much as to devote a whole lecture to a single one of his Sonnets, —no unusual honor paid by poets in those days to Sonnets, but seldom by such a poet as the author of the 'Jerusalem Delivered'?"*

*Who is this critic, I would say, that he should prate so glibly and smile so highly in this matter, or touch with such lily-fingers what these masters have handled with so strong a grip? He reminds me of a silly lady, much given to Hegel clubs and the like, who on observing a fine posie of flowers on my mantel shelf, stood half way of the room and said, with a superior ecstasy, "Ah! when I behold such exquisite blossoms, I feel it is a desecration to smell of them!" But the case would not be so bad for our voluble critic if he had taken thought enough to hold to his thought; for even if a navigator anchor to a wrong coast, he will show some quality if he anchor well. But in the same number of the critical journal I find it written concerning a certain verse of Shelley that "the very irregularity of it is intended to provoke in the reader a vivid sense of the richness and fullness of the skylark's song," and it is remarked further that a certain writer on verse better "might have directed his attention to the splendid effects produced by the masters of verse through even slight departures from the basal rhythm," and in another number I find an account with much praise of a book on a great poem, saying that the book "is an excellent piece of interpretative and critical work," and that "it is, perhaps, to be regretted that the space devoted to the beauty of the lyrical outbursts is not greater." At times, then, our critic, when it happens so to befall in the irregular skip of his fancy, finds something more than a droop of the eyelid to bestow on the notion of explaining a poem.*

Now, I have some things to say to you about this book itself, as fully and freely—indeed, more without reserve than ever hitherto, because the pen hath a veil for me which talk hath not—as if we were sitting together, as some of us have done so often, so long and so happily, around the long table, studying of poetic truth. For what these airy fowl, the critics, these sun-eyeing eaglets, these all-knowing Olympians, these semi-deities, and demi-semi deities, and bemi-demi-semi deities, may think or say of me, or whether they say aught of me, is lighter to me than thistledown; but what you, my near-heart many-few, may think and wish of me and tell to me, hic labor, hoc opus est to my soul. Wherefore, if you shall learn that some of these masters have set upon me valiantly and said fierce things, be not troubled, I pray you; for even if I shall know of them, it will be but as a wet day which I note without heeding; but it is ten to one I shall not know, for I never yet hunted in papers and magazines to discover what these notables said of me in my bumble ten books, or whether they said aught; and now I am less like than ever to do so, since I rest me in you, my friends, who are my domicile, my senate, my great world.

In this book all is simple Nature. First, as to substance it is so. I have sought for nothing, nor cast about for occasions or themes or thoughts “conjured up to serve occasions of poetic pomp,” but duly and obediently have written what hath been granted me, in puris naturalibus, and every song of them had its one sudden origin and hath the same continuing purpose. ‘Belike you might

think, because there be just one hundred and fifty of these songs, the major of them, that I staked out in advance just such a parterre, and said, "Go to, now! I will write one hundred and fifty Sonnets." But I counted them not, nor ever knew their number, until I sent the last few of them to press, when, having written till the light failed me, and having then thrown away some three or four, lo! there were just one hundred and fifty in all. There is no arrangement of the Sonnets. They were taken mainly in whatever order happened, as they were finished, or at least escaped further dependence on me, and became ready, or, howsoever, set forth. Perhaps some may say the book is far too private, so many of the songs being for you and of you; but this will be an objection which we shall not heed. For you will not be displeased to meet each other in this way. There is enough for the public if they care for any; and if there be more for my friends, I am happy so.

But, secondly, this book is as simple Nature in style as in matter. Here is no straining and twisting of expression, no contortions of words, no manner of hot writing. I am tempted to say, as Ben Jonson in his "Discoveries," that in poesy "now nothing is good that is natural. Right and natural language seems to have least of wit in it. That which is writted and tortured, is counted the more exquisite. Cloth of Bodkin, or Tissue, must be embroidered, as if no face were fair that were not powdered or painted. No beauty to be had but in wresting and writbing our own tongue. \* \* \* \*

*There can not be one color of the mind, another of the wit. If the mind be staid, grave and composed, the wit is so; that vitiated, the other is blown and deflowered.*

\* \* \* *So that we may conclude—Wheresoever manners and fashion are corrupted, language is. It imitates the public riot. The excess of feasts and apparel are the notes of a sick State; and the wantonness of language of a sick mind.” If “rare Ben” so complain, and seem to forecast much that vapors among us, belike we must think the evil a chronic plague, afflicting all ages; which may make us more patient with the form of sickness now prevailing. Yet surely not the less, but the more, should we give heed to our own health of taste, that it suffer not, and we should bear our witness. Wherefore I will say,—Whatever poets of the present time write such lines as*

*“The deep, divine, dark day-shine of the sea,”*

*let them have their will of them, and their readers their fill of them; but, gentle friends, you will find here no such Simian things (I mean big antics of body with small intelligence—sound being the body of verse), nor such a heaping up of syllables to the senses similar, but unagreeing in thought, as if immoderate mass were shape and vehemence music,—not these, but only the natural, unfettered melodies that the brooks flow withal, and the winds, even at their wildest, blow withal.*

*This being so, methinks life is ordained for me as much as anything in Nature. Never yet was a poet killed by these potent errants, the critics,—not bodily*

*killed, and still more not his book. 'Tis said Keats died of the bullying of some of them; but I never could credit it, for I could not think so admirable a poet such a ninny. The poets live, and if they be poetical to the full measure and favor of it, they will be joyful past attending to dispraise or even knowing it, and past increase by praise, except by the delight of their friends beloved, for whom they sing with a devoutness. So says Browning merrily, yet with piety—*

“ Mine’s a freehold, by grace of the grand Lord  
 Who lets out the ground here, my landlord;  
 To him I pay quit-rent, devotion;  
 Nor hence shall I budge, I’ve a notion.  
 Nay, here shall my whistling and singing  
 Set all his street’s echoes a-ringing  
 Long after the last of your number  
 Has ceased my front court to encumber.”

*And again he says that he writes*

“ Stuff you should stow away, ensconce  
 In the deep and dark, to be found fast fixed  
 At the century’s close: such time strength spends  
 A-sweetening for my friends.”

*And 'tis with like meaning that of his lift-up of his readers and their return to a valley-rest afterward, he says,*

“ Shall not my friends go feast again on sward,  
 Though cognizant of country in the clouds  
 Higher than wistful eagle’s horny eye  
 Ever unclosed for?”

*Such is his faith or foreseeing; and so will it be with him righteously, when equally the big Dogberrys who only scoff at him and the Man-Friday worshipers who fall prostrate to him have gotten themselves once for all into their little bed-places. And so hath it been with other poets, a lovely host of them, who still sing audibly and welcomedly above the thick throats of the critics, like either jays or larks—what matter? so they be natural and in place—or the calls of milkmen and the quaint cries of fish-venders and fruit-sellers, and all “the melodies of morn,” suitable in Nature’s day, however the morn-fuddled from the night-revel growl. So triumph the songs of real singers; and so methinks your praise, as Cowper says, will “prosper even mine,” being approbation by laws divine and natural. If so, well; and if not, still well; for I have no quarrel with whatever may be when the minister Time shall have done the will of the King.*

*Now, of the Sonnet—that form of all forms, that moonstone of song, that crystal of opaline facets—I have somewhat to say to you: and this because it is so sadly misconceived and monstrously unknown by many of the critic gentry who talk of it glibly. Chiefly, to the great displeasure of any one who hath understood and loved the Sonnet, these quick folk are given to calling it artificial. “A highly artificial form,” they say, and other such like expressions, meaning that the Sonnet is a sheer invention, a bit of ingenuity and mechanism wherein some cunning designer hath displayed himself. Now, I*

will urge to you, what some of you know very well by long and lovely studies with me, that this precious gem of form is not artificial, nor was made up and patched together wilfully by any one, but is a piece of Nature and belongs in her kingdoms as much as any crystal or any living being of plants or animals. We may imagine a polyp (and therein I take nothing too senseless to figure the confident boldness of these guessing critics) surveying a human face and discoursing critic-wise thus: "Was ever a more artificial thing than this unsimple and much-made-up countenance? Behold what a thing it is, of many diverse parts and multiple appendages, far from the simplicity of my features. Observe the forehead fringed with a very different manner of substance, the hair; and hanging out underneath to balance it a sharp protuberance, the chin, with again hair pendant, to balance the hair of the top; and midway a sharp ridge set lengthwise perpendicularly, called a nose; and below it an opening, set lengthwise horizontally, called a mouth; and above the nose two holes with lids, entering straight inward, called eyes, highly colored with hues unlike anything else in the whole, even unto milk-white and blue and green and green-gray and blue-gray; and at the lower end of the nose two holes entering perpendicularly, without lids, called nostrils; and on each side a big fleshy bulge, exactly balancing, called cheeks; and behind these, two thin and most curiously wrought flag-like parts hung out, called ears, which again have holes in them that enter neither like the eye-holes nor like the nose-holes, but in a third



*direction transverse to both the others. Plainly some bold contriver hath patched up an artificial complexity herein. Nature is direct and simple, as you behold it in me, the polyp, that have no such assemblage of unlike parts.'— Yet to suppose a polyp to discourse thus is to clash reason with reason and put thought against thought by conceiving a creature endowed with reason to deliver himself unreasoningly, even unto the folly of thinking artificial what is the very top of Nature. Yet this were little worse than our critics do, when they look blind-worm-wise from below at that flowering-tree-top of form, the Sonnet, and call it artificial. They take one glance, and if they observe something much unlike themselves and apart from what before they have seen, they study it not humbly and closely, but bravely dub it artificial. They found not deeply nor work by Nature's true relationships, but piece things together like tiles, to dance over them. They skill not nor conceive to match them by harmonies of colors or agreements of substance, but patch them one to another in any manner, however they be discordant or corrode and crumble one another, so only they make smooth surface for the fantastic toe of their mental motion. For example, thus spake one of them to me scornfully of the Sonnet: "Fourteen lines! Why not sixteen? Or twelve or ten?" "My gentle joy," go browse! May a juicy thistle befall thee! But do thou, dear friend, who treadest reverently in Nature's borders, let me show, lest never thou may have thought of it by a happy fall of thy attention to it, why there is a form—as well called Sonnet as by any other*

*name—which is a bloom of Nature as much in its size as in its shape, and could not be sixteen lines, nor more nor less than just fourteen “but in the estimation of a hair.”*

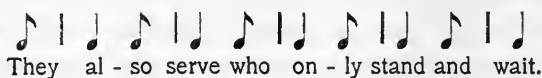
*Suppose some one noble thought present itself, in a kind of naked completeness, unclad with other thoughts, standing forth for the moment suddenly alone. Surely there is naught artificial in that, but it is highly natural, and what certainly will happen to a mind that so long and so faithfully hath known a thought in its logical garments and among its relations, that he is given intimacy to see it alone and, as it were, in the nude Splendor of it. Given some such one noble thought, it will require a form of utterance of it, not too long to compress the thought finely, which is to say, to show it in its own sun-bath, and not too short to do it justice richly, which is to say (pursuant of my figure of Speech), to stretch it in the whole fine stature of it in the free modesty of Nature. Now, to serve this requirement of a form for the utterance of one noble thought hath grown up the Sonnet. It has taken two forms, called the Italian and the English. These proceed by different laws, but each is a natural bloom. Let us attend first to the Italian.*

*The points of structure of the Italian Sonnet are as follows:*

- 1. The length of the line.*
- 2. The movement of the line.*
- 3. The number of lines.*
- 4. The order of the rhymes.*
- 5. Certain internal laws involved in the order of the rhymes and in the length of the whole.*

*Let me speak of each of these in the order of them, but (for it is not my purpose to write an essay on the Sonnet) as briefly, and even technically, as my aim will admit. The aim is to show that the Sonnet is a piece of Nature and not an artifice.*

OF THE LENGTH OF THE LINE. *The line is the English heroic; that is, a line of five measures in triple time, each measure having three beats with accent on the first, and typically arranged in one long syllable and one short, occupying respectively the time of two beats and one beat; and the line begins typically with the last beat of a measure. For example, the concluding line of Milton's famous Sonnet on his blindness, which is typical.—*



*The heroic line obviously has ten syllables typically. The choice of this line for the heroic metre is neither accident nor invention, but a matter of Nature, and as pertinent to us as to enjoy the green color of the foliage. Therefore it has been approved by all English poets from Chaucer to this time, and all the greatest poems have been written in it. It is, and admirably, of just the right length, being not too long for a noble compactness (as any one may study by means of the six-measure line—the Alexandrine—and the noble effect of the long-drawn tone, as it were, of that line, in Spenser's stanza, compared with what would be the tedium of that stanza if it*

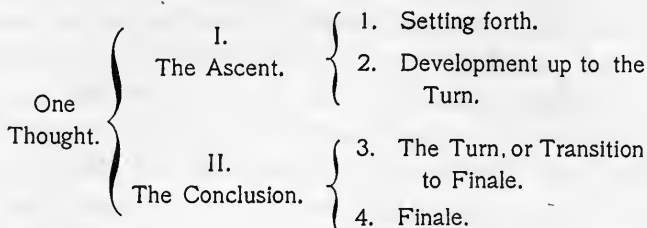
were all or mainly six-measured), and not too short for stateliness or for easy and free handling. On this latter point, namely, the freedom of the composer in its length, and the consequent grandeur of its scope, Prof. Sylvester in his "Laws of Verse," speaking of "Dryden's so strongly and repeatedly giving vent to his sense of freedom and unshackledness when having ten syllables in a line to deal with instead of eight," says, "To me the difference between the two seems like that between bathing in a pond or inland creek as compared with a plunge in the open sea; the very *embarras de choix*, the sense of infinite variety of combination and unlimited room for disporting the imagination at will, has deterred me from more than timidly venturing upon this form of verse, as a miniature painter would naturally shrink from trying his pencil on an historical canvas." I will not burden this page with Prof. Sylvester's mathematics of the freedom of the five-measured as compared with the four-measured line, by which he shows "the facility to be as 120 to 24, i. e., as 5 to 1." Suffice it that the heroic line fits to our mental being marvelously, and hath a place in Nature as much as the human intelligence that so can try wings in it. Moreover, to this virtue of dimension must be added that of having an odd number of measures, and thereby an exact middle measure, which fact greatly enriches its scope and variety in fine phrasings, pauses, symmetries, balancings; and this virtue extends into the phrasings and balancings of the syllables as sounds no less than as significant.

OF THE MOVEMENT OF THE LINE: *One point under this head I have mentioned just above, namely, the finely variable motion of the heroic line in phrasings and pauses. This I will not expand, though it is worthy of large treatment, but add only that the typical motion of the line, namely, a long following a short, (called iambic as distinguished from trochaic) instead of the reverse way, bath a virtue and effect of its own which is plain in fact and a mystery in being. For it is not explicable how the ear and the rhythmic sense of the mind so should take hold of a melody as that the movement of it throughout should hang on its beginning with the long or the short. Yet so it is; and poets have counted beautiful, which is the same as to say natural, the beginning of the heroic line with the short. Moreover, the triple measure, which makes this movement possible, is germane to the English, whose syllables and words so are framed in triple counts that the whole language is a scanning in that manner. Wherefore the motion of the heroic line is no invention unless English itself be an artifice instead of a growth of Nature; and indeed this triple time arrives from the very dawn of articulation and is to be found in the most primitive tongues, being as natural to our vocality as breathing.*

*Here then we have the primary element of the Sonnet, its line and the motion of it, not artificial in any manner, but simply a gift to us of Nature, a gift as unfathomable and all-connected as all Nature's bestowments.*

OF THE NUMBER OF LINES: *That the lines count fourteen, and can be no more and no less, arises from*

*the very principle and structure of this gem of form. Its centrality and radiation may be set forth thus :*



*To extend this diagram into words: The Sonnet is made of One Thought, presented in two general divisions, namely, the Ascent of the Thought and the Conclusion, these two proceeding by four parts, namely, the Setting forth, or Statement, of the Thought, then the Development of it up to the Turn, then the Turn, or Transition to, or Preparation for, the Finale, and lastly the Finale or Completion. Now, this structure or motion is wholly natural, not an artifice or invention, but a process of nature; and the length of the Sonnet is determined by it rigorously. For as the Sonnet must have but One Thought, of necessity it must be either diffuse, which never is beauty, or sternly compressed, compacted, firm, which is dignity always and may be great beauty, even unto a grandeur. Now, in all composition that runs in time and sequence, it is a principle that the concluding division must be the shortest. 'Tis no matter how many or how long or how varied divisions there may be, the last must be more brief than any other of equal generality and*

import. If it be asked why this is so, I have not inquired whether there be an answer in some psychology. But if there be none, 'tis no matter. Enough to say that so it is observed, and a certain brevity of conclusion is found to affect us pleasantly and leave the whole work with a happy symmetry in the mind. Now, if by this principle we examine the conclusion of the Sonnet, we shall see that being in six lines (the Sestet), having three lines for each of its two parts (the Tercets), it is just as it must be. For suppose it be four lines; then there must be either only one rhyme, which would be bad, or two, which then either must be couplets—again bad, not to be admitted in a Sonnet—or a quatrain alternately rhymed, which then hath no marks or natural boundaries as a two-structured conclusion. If five lines, or seven, then would be frustrated the fine and simple symmetry of rhyme which is so great a beauty in the two tercets. If eight lines, then they must be either in quatrains alternately rhymed, or in couplets, or have at least one couplet, which is bad, or be irregularly rhymed, which also were a sacrifice of a lovely balance. Besides, if so many as either seven or eight lines, then as the first part, the Ascent, must be impressively longer, and as impressiveness will require greater difference in length the longer the last part, there would be need of eleven or twelve lines at least in the Ascent, making the whole form eighteen or twenty lines long; and thereupon the fine intense brevity, suitable for one strong or gracious thought, hath disappeared, and also the swiftness of the conclusion—which are virtues of the

*Sonnet.* But six lines in the conclusion give just the right values and effects; of rhyme, because then there may be three rhymes—the best form—or two, without the obtrusion of a couplet; and of length, because it is swift, yet hath space enough; and with this length an advantage of two lines in the Ascent gives enough pre-eminence and weight therein. So then the whole is short enough for one thought compacted, and yet large enough to carry the thought, being a form with the force of two quatrains for developing the thought, and two tercets for its conclusion and binding up.

OF THE ORDER OF THE RHYMES: That there shall be rhyme in the Sonnet, follows naturally both from its size and its richness. For the size of the form requires the support of sound, and the richness of it is the availing itself of the finest qualities and resources natural in syllables. There be some persons, and even some called critics, who speak slightly of that fine reminiscence of the ear named rhyme. But as well might they object to the harmonies and repetitions of tones in music as to the like in syllables, which are tones, in some points unlike, but in some excelling, the quality of music-tones. And it is naught that in rhyme the harmonies are sequences, instead of being struck at one moment as in music; for in music too the progression of chords hath an element and value akin to rhyme, and in verse the detention of tone, which is a happy power of the ear, is like that temporary persistence of a light in the eye, whereby a revolving spark becomes not a moving point of glow, but



*a shining circle. 'Tis true that rhyme, like many harmonies and progressions and good effects in music, may be used ill, and true also that sometimes 'tis to be omitted well, as in music there is place for passages in unison. But to object to rhyme in the whole, is such a flouting of wide and lovely ranges of qualities in syllables and the fine accord of the ear therewith, that I know not whether denial of it be an affectation such as may be suspected in whoever vaunts superiority to any delight; or a dim folly akin to asceticism, a defamation of a certain sweetness and overflow of life and color, like Pascal's monstrous aversion to his sister's kissing her children; or a plain ignorance which hath caught at some pretense and echoes it around its windy caverns. Either way, I will take no notice of it, but accept gladly what I find nobly resonant, and speak of its place and property in the Sonnet. As I write, my girls are singing rapturously close by me, now in two parts, now with one voice, now with two in unison, anon again in harmonies, in and out with sparkling varieties and every quality of the virtue of tones. And shall I put some away,—like a cast of one hue over the prism,—or know not the like in syllables? O, away with your dull parsimonies! I will be rich with the whole of Nature.*

*The Sonnet is to be musical, fair with the sweet sound-values of syllables in all their means for beauty; therefore there will be some rhyme. But again it is to be marked by dignity, impressiveness, force, reserve, compression; therefore the rhymes will be few, comporting with the*

strong and severe simpleness of manner in the Sonnet, and affecting the ear in exactly right proportion, not obtruding past their due office in that verse. Therefore, also, as rhyme is not to be omitted, being a force of beauty, and yet not to be multiplied in kinds, there must be repetition of the few rhymes; and the repeating of them must be in such way as to preserve the fine monotone and yet not cause the ringing or jingling of one vowel. Again, the placing of the rhymes must have a regularity, for this is form and dignity, and moreover hath a possibility of use with a purpose and power inhering in that form. Now, these natural conditions are obtained in the Sonnet by the prevailing of only two rhymes in the whole Octave, and these so disposed in the quatrains (inside and outside rhymes) as to attain the greatest dignity by remote echoes which delight the memory-power of the ear and require the full virtues of its attention and perception. Hence, also, the rule that these rhymes so are to be treated in the perfect Sonnet as not to come to a concluding couplet anywhere. And now coming to the Sestet, in the first Tercet of which occurs the Turn of the Thought to the Conclusion, it is proper, and indeed we rightly may say inevitable, that this Turn of the Thought should be marked by new quality and order in the rhyme. It is so; and here again, as in the Octave, the principle of a certain remoteness of echo obtains and gives a charming music with also a lovely dignity; for in the best form of the Sonnet, most loved and written by the greatest masters, there are three rhymes in the Sestet, the latter Tercet rhyming with the first

one line by line, so that each line-end hath its mate in an echo three lines away—a very beautiful sound-order whose equal charm and soberness to the ear are very notable. Yet, though this be the finest, 'tis held by all poets that there are others which are suitable, and hence there is a liberty of choice in the Sestet, while the form of the Octave must be observed with the strict obedience due to its place, purpose and perfectness. This liberty in the Sestet is another natural grace and virtue of the Sonnet; for it grants a variety at need, and this just where it should be, namely, in the conclusion, which thus may be brought to some special agreement with some peculiar effect or purpose in the Octave.

But now here I can not stop, in speaking of the rhymes, without recurring to the natural dimensions of the Sonnet; for the laws of the rhymes lead directly to the length of it. For why, it may be asked, should not the principle of odd numbers, that they afford the grace of symmetry, be applied to make quintrains rather than quatrains the steps of the Ascent of the Sonnet. The answer is in the law of the rhymes; for these so are disposed as actually to effect in even lines the symmetry of odd lines and their balance on a center. For the two inside rhymes, i. e. of the second and third lines of the quatrain, effect a central unity as of one line or portion, on each side whereof the outside rhymes cause the first and fourth lines to balance finely. Moreover, not only thus do the rhymes, so disposed, have effect like a balance of an odd number on the central digit in a beautiful

manner, but there is also in this way a perfect balance of the rhyming sounds themselves round a real, but invisible and inaudible, axis—on both sides thereof a perfect symmetry,—which all would be done away in a quintrain. For in a quintrain there must be either a greater weight of some rhyme-sound, or else one line unrhymed. Wherefore all poets have leaned to the quatrain form, showing a general ear for it and natural approval. As the rhymes thus lead to the quatrain by these admirable balances, and bind thus the quatrain into a unity, so also do they lead to the Tercets. For as there is a turn of purpose or function at that point in the Sonnet, so it is suitable and natural, as I have said, indeed, inevitable, that the point should be marked by a change of rhyme. Now this change may be either in the sounds or in the succession, and the largest effect and richest contrast will concur with both changes at once. This is accomplished in the Tercets. For in the finest and most valued form of Sestet, as above described, there is a total change of rhyme-sound, and an equally notable change in the number of the rhymes, and these are disposed in a succession whose contrast with the quatrains is as extreme as can be, nor is there any other form beside the Sestet of two Tercets in which the contrast of arrangement of sounds against the Octave of two quatrains could be so great. Yet this contrast in the rhymes and in the order of them is marked with the same dignity, the same balance on an aerial axis, and the same delicate remoteness of echo, that are charms in the Octave rhymes.

You will observe in the foregoing that I have not known from what trait to treat the Sonnet first, whether from the rhyme or from the length; for I was compelled to refer to the rhymes in treating of the length, and again to the length in speaking of the rhymes. For the length so depends on the rhymes, and again the rhymes on the length, that they are mutually involved and inseparable. But let any one contemplate these elements together—if this account of the Sonnet be reasonable—then how vain and ignorant will it seem to call that generous and fine form artificial! For plainly up out of the properties of time, rhythm and sound in speech the Sonnet hath grown as naturally as a flowering tree out of the earth.

If now it be asked—Why and how are all these effects done on us? Why like we the finale to be shorter than foregoing parts? Why enjoy we the symmetry of balances on a dividing line? Why have we so much pleasure in the line of five measures? Why delight we in a triple time in speech? Why are we charmed with recurrent phrasings? Why do rhythmic pauses enchant us? Why doth the beginning with unaccented beat move us throughout the line magically? Why hath the quatrain so great echo in us? Why is likeness of tones so rich a food to our ears? Why have sequences of sounds, progressions of vowels and echoes of consonants, such mysterious attractions? Why are some sequences light, trifling, and some dignified, noble? Why is a change of sound with change of thought excellent?—if we ask these questions, I cannot answer. As I have said, 'tis simply observable

and perceptible that these things are so. And why is the grass green instead of red? And why are we charmed with it? And why are the heavens like crimson seas at sunrise or sunset? And why is it glorious to us? Why are some smells delicious and some noxious to us? And why are some two or several tones together harmonious and sweet to us, and some others discordant and jarring? For it is observable that some creatures delight in odors which to us are vexatious. And any creature is pleased with noises or cries made by itself, how strident or discordant soever to other ears. Why are these things so? We cannot tell. Nor can we follow anything beyond a question or two without coming to the unquestionable and unanswering. We have to take these things as harmonies divine and natural, and our love of them as being our blessed oneness with them in "the One in the Many."

To those of you, beloved friends for whom I write, who have sat with me around the long table these many years, the above discourse will be but the condensing of many and long and happy expansions and discussions; and to others, though I acknowledge it too brief and needing unfoldment at different points, yet I pray you forgive this, as it seemed the better way, and consider that it hath this advantage, namely, that whoever will unfold the whole for themselves by applying it to many different Sonnets and working it out in them, will attain a far better apprehension of the Sonnet-form as a growth of Nature than could be conveyed to them by any expansions done for them in these limits, perhaps in any limits.

OF THE ENGLISH SONNET: *The English Sonnet consists of three quatrains, each alternately rhymed, and a concluding couplet. It is very much simpler in structure and laws than the Italian, but equally is remote from invention, being truly a natural product and an organism. All that in the foregoing has been said about the quatrain, applies to the same of course as an element or formal part in the English Sonnet-form, and need not be repeated here. All that has been said touching the Sonnet as a vehicle for one worthy thought and for a strong compacting of that thought into a tense expression, fits to the English form as well as to the Italian. Likewise suits equally what has been said of the line of five measures. In these points the Italian and the English agree, and equally are growths of Nature, not artifices of men. (The traits wherein the English form differs from the Italian, are three, namely, the law of the rhymes, the threefold development, and the peculiar conclusion by a couplet.) Touching the rhymes, the English Sonnet hath the utmost possible variety of sweet musical echoes, attained by alternate rhyming in the quatrains (a highly natural and inevitable manner as old as rhyme itself), and not only by rhymes contrasted well in one quatrain, but by quatrains richly varied and contrasting in rhyme with each other, and by the concluding couplet. The couplet again should rhyme with sounds diverse from any in the endings of the quatrain lines. This is the typical and most resourceful manner of the rhymes if handled masterfully; but it is varied much and with sundry lovely effects of monotones*

or combinations, by poets who can finger all the keys and stops of the organ of their art.

The concluding couplet fulfills the law that the finale must be the shortest of the integral parts, but in a very peculiar and striking manner. In the perfect English Sonnet, the couplet is an epigram, re-uttering the substance, or the one thought, of the Sonnet, or at least a condensed and manifest consequence or issue of it, in a swift, sententious, penetrating style, having the inevitable eloquence of a sufficient thought pressed into small space, and thus binding together and clasping as with a golden band all the argument and imagery of the Sonnet. And no English Sonnet is a masterful or satisfying example of this form if it fail in the power and office of the couplet.

Here then, so far, we have the English form as one thought in three quatrains richly varied in contrasting harmonies, and finally encircled and compressed together by the band of an epigram uttered with a new harmony and with a tense force. All this I conceive to be a most natural and uninvented thing, discovered and found in Nature, but not devised. All the elements thereof, but the ending couplet, have been treated hereinbefore as Nature's express gifts to us, mysterious in their fitness to us as all her gifts are; and as to the couplet, 'tis but the law of the finale appearing in a peculiar product, which is a sudden bloom of the Sonnet's substance into an epigram. And what more natural or inevitable or according to many examples in living organisms than



*that an orderly determination and growth of some length should shoot suddenly into a flower or other conclusive form?*

*Now as to the three quatrains, here again the whole movement is Nature's own. The effect of odd numbers, because they afford a satisfying balance and symmetry, again obtains herein. The English Sonnet is like a journey by three well-ordained stages, or like three firm and equal strides in one movement between stations. The one thought is treated three-fold, which is the way of Nature, being a beginning, middle, and end, a setting forth, a development, a conclusion. 'Tis true the natural and effective proportions in such a progress of thought make the middle part, or development, longer than the first part, or statement, and the conclusion the shortest of the three. But this natural and pleasureable architecture is replaced with another kind of beauty in the English Sonnet by the potency of the concluding couplet. For this, being a conclusion or finale, relieves the quatrains of the necessity of the proportions which the three-foldness of the thought must have if it were standing alone and included the finale. Hence the quatrains may offer, as they do, the character quite peculiar to this form, namely, the unfolding of a thought in three equal rich quantities, which offend not but balance well because they all lean equally on a sufficient and embracing conclusion, the tense epigram of the couplet. Now, if thus the thought be to be spoken in three equal parts (each step being of equal moment and admitting of equal force and beauty),*

*and in a compressed tense form, as may befit the utterance of one fine and gracious thought, and if the strain fall naturally into the lovely quatrain, then what more or else can there be than three quatrains? For three is the first odd number, and the only one before nine which admits of a balance of two extremes on an equal middle. Now nine quatrains would be too long, both for the compression of one thought, and for an embracing conclusion in a couplet. Wherefore again, in the English form as in the Italian, fourteen lines is the inevitable number, nor can there be more nor less than just the fourteen to fulfill the conditions, namely, of one thought tensely compacted, composed in three equal parts, with a finale finely compressed into a brief epigrammatic circuit.*

*Thus in all these elements and characters just described, and their mutual inter-weaving and dependence in the Sonnet, I conceive the English form, as I have said, to be as inevitable and as much a pure bloom of Nature as the Italian. And if it were not so, even Shakespeare's vast beauty and beaming verse could not have made the English Sonnet the sweet and living instrument it is.*

*I may add that instead of developing the thought, by beginning, progress and ending, the English form simply may repeat it over and over, quatrain by quatrain, if it be done with fine variety and reinforcing richness of fancy mated to music; which is one reason why the three parts should be equal, and therefore, by all the other conditions, each one a quatrain. This may be observed in the*

glowing ingot of many a one of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*—for example the famous and beautiful CXVI, wherein the quatrains merely repeat one another—but with what rich variety and noble imagery!

It hath been opined that the English form is marked more by sweetness, the Italian by strength and elevation. Perhaps there may be some truth in the view. Yet it is not to be pushed into exclusiveness. For the English may arise and gird itself mightily, and the Italian discover a voice like a dove.

'Tis a remarkable power of the English Sonnet, by reason of the couplet, to hold the sense and purpose in suspense to the very last lines, and then suddenly illuminate the whole and bind up all into a unity and fling back a force over it in a marvelous manner. For an example in point take the following very fine and all but perfect Sonnet of George Herbert; and note too, besides the point in question, the very beautiful phrasing, which is so pronounced as to add effect to the unpausing movement of the couplet lines, and yet is itself varied and the phrasings made to swing on hinges, as it were, by two unpausing lines in the Sonnet, they, as well as the couplet, recurring to the movement of the strong opening line:

Lord, with what care hast Thou begirt us round!  
 Parents first season us : then schoolmasters  
 Deliver us to laws ; they send us bound  
 To rules of reason, holy messengers,  
 Pulpits and Sundays, sorrow dogging sin,

Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,  
 Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in,  
 Bibles laid open, millions of surprises ;  
 Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness.  
 The sound of glory ringing in our ears ;  
 Without, our shame ; within, our consciences ;  
 Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears.  
     Yet all these fences and their whole array  
     One cunning bosom-sin blows quite away.

*The beauty of the following Sonnet of William Drummond moves me to insert it as another instance of suspense of meaning till the couplet lets it loose like a beam of light :*

As when it happeneth that some lovely town  
 Unto a barbarous besieger falls,  
 Who there by sword and flame himself installs,  
 And, cruel, it in tears and blood doth drown ;  
 Her beauty spoiled, her citizens made thralls,  
 His spite yet so can not her all throw down  
 But that some statue, arch, fane of renown  
 Yet lurks unmaimed within her weeping walls :  
 So, after all the spoil, disgrace and wreck,  
 That time, the world and death could bring combined,  
 Amidst that mass of ruins they did make  
 Safe and all scarless yet remains my mind.  
     From this so high transcending rapture springs,  
     That I, all else defaced, not envy kings.

*'Tis a mistake often made (wherefore I recur here to an engaging principle which often we have discussed around the long table) to consider poetic laws as limita-*

tions—a bondage which, however necessary to some ends, the poet must strive with, setting free his meaning and no little of his beauty in spite of the rigid resistance of the form. On the contrary, the fine and admirable truth is that, if a poet have strong conscience for form, and a humble obedience to it, the form will lead the composer to beauties not his own, wondrously given to him, suddenly beaming on him, because he waits on Nature with a piety and seeks not his own way. Often have we proved this impressive and verily sacred thing by experiment. Around the long table frequently we have been concerned with some poem wherein the poet hath assumed too much of himself, and hath not been in any awe of the form, but lightly hath turned from it; and then when we have essayed to amend those places by a reverent obedience to the formal law, after a little patience and endeavor, we, even we, have been led to expression and to beauty which have been wonders to us, wherein we have agreed that they were great improvements and illuminations over the lines of the at-that-point negligent and unpious poet. This comes of the virtue of the form, that it is of Nature, and again this proves that virtue. For obedience would not lead surely to beauty if the form were a mere invention or artifice; for no man can invent anything that will not apply as ill to one case as it fits well to another. For illustration I will venture to find fault with the foregoing beautiful Sonnet of Drummond, and to think that a simple obedience to form will amend it, and with a gain of force remarkable in so slight changes. The Sonnet being

*English in form, the prevalence of but two rhymes in the first two quatrains is an exception which may have an end and beauty of its own, and fit well with the monotone of the imagery; and the change therefrom at the third quatrain agrees with the marked change and advance of thought. But the breaking up of the alternating rhyming of the first two quatrains bath no meaning and no fitness that I can see; and if it be said that it suits well a picture of the confusion of a sacked town, it is to be answered that it interferes with the value of the prevailment of but two rhymes in the eight lines to convey the monotone of desolation, whereas this will be helped by the regular order and recurrence of the rhymes; and thus the ear is disappointed—with no reason which makes the disappointment a shaking of the mind, as it were, to apprehend better a picture, but simply the ear is left confused or discontented. Witness now in the following how easily the poet might have obeyed the form, and say whether the obedience be not improvement; and note therein that what is the fifth line in the original, the sixth in the proposed change, gains much in force by transference from the passive to the active:*

As when it happeneth that some lovely town  
 Unto a barbarous besieger falls,  
 Who, cruel, it in tears and blood doth drown,  
 And there by sword and flame himself installs,  
 His spite yet so can not her all throw down,  
 Her beauty spoil, her citizens make thralls,  
 But that some statue, arch, fane of renown  
 Yet lurks unmaimed within her weeping walls.

*A much more impressive instance of loss by unobedience to form I will cite, without presuming to offer amendment, in Shakespeare's Sonnet XXIX:*

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
 I all alone beweepe my outcast state  
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
 And look upon myself, and curse my fate,  
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
 Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,  
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,  
 With what I most enjoy contented least,  
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
 Haply I think on thee,—and then my state  
 (Like to the lark at break of day arising  
 From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate ;  
 For thy sweet love remember'd, such wealth brings,  
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

*The rhymes in the first and third quatrains turn on the same vowels, and in part the same consonants too, and, what is worse, the same word that ends the second line of the first quatrain ends the second line of the third, and, to make this ungainliness still greater, the word reappears near the end of the couplet. These defects are very unpleasant to the ear and spread a thin veneer of poverty over a genuine rich substance. The Sonnet truly is beautiful in spite of these blemishes; but the important reflection is this—If Shakespeare had paused over this composition enough, and with enough conscience, resolved that it should be shaped into obedience to pure form, it is*

impossible to say to what characteristic splendid expressions the "Star of Poets" might have been led, lifting this Sonnet to be a very wonder.

After so much about the form, I will take leave to say a little about the substance of the Sonnet; for I think many Sonnets come to naught because it is attempted to put into them a substance unfit, as if one should essay to keep wine in a vessel cut from rock salt, whereas this would dissolve the vessel and spoil the wine. The Sonnet is specially the vehicle of personal feeling and of thoughts thereto germane. This gives it a wide scope; for every manner of fancy, imagery, figure, allusion, beauty or nobility of diction, may come to the service of such thoughts. Even comic matter, a fine humor, a rich satire, a dainty ridicule, a roguish thrust, may shelter in the Sonnet. In illustration whereof it is delight to quote Austin Dobson's Sonnet of Don Quixote:

"Behind thy pasteboard, on thy battered hack,  
Thy lean cheek striped with plaster to and fro,  
Thy long spear leveled at thy unseen foe,  
And doubtful Sancho trudging at thy back,  
Thou wert a figure strange enough, good lack!  
To make wiseacredom, both high and low,  
Rub purblind eyes, and, having watched thee go,  
Dispatch its Dogberrys upon thy track.  
Alas! poor Knight! Alas! poor soul possest!  
Yet would to-day, when courtesy grows chill,  
And life's fine royalties are turned to jest,  
Some fire of thine might burn within us still!  
Ah! would but one might lay his lance in rest,  
And charge in earnest — were it but a mill.



*I must own that to me this is one of the most affecting Sonnets it hath been my fortune to meet, and an exquisite example how close to humor lies pathos. And indeed a smile in a Sonnet is not a laughter, and the form hath by nature a sweet seriousness, even a solemnity. Sidney Lanier has said that whenever an English poet has had some special holy confidences to give the world, he has chosen the Sonnet for his form of verse and manner of conveyance. Now as this seriousness involves a befitting thought, capable of extreme compression, there are two kinds of substance which are not natural to the Sonnet, namely, narrative and description. For these exist in their details, and therefore must be either too meager for the worth of the Sonnet, or so rich as to exceed its limits. In either case we shall have an empty, indigent Sonnet, because either there is so little matter for it, or so little of so much can be gotten into it. Description may be ventured if it be successful in very broad treatment and sweeping outlines, and erected, as it were, like an archway or a vista for a sufficient thought, whose march through the description is the aim of the whole. Narrative may be admitted under the same rule; but it is more difficult of treatment and a dangerous adventure. And neither description nor narrative can be aught but failure when made the whole or main substance of a Sonnet. For example of this, touching narrative, I will insert here three Sonnets, which some of you have condemned; and indeed I must admit a lack of sufficiency in them. Yet they were not born of the narrative, but of the thoughts*

*whereby the legends captivated me and still so bold me that I am fain to keep the Sonnets here, after removing them from the book, owning that they exhibit the dangers of narrative. One is a Parsee myth, as follows :*

When Yima journeyed to the fierce sun-sea,  
And plunged therein — so saith the Parsee script —  
And in the piling billows had been dipt,  
Forth with a necromantic strength came he.  
Then had he might to stretch the earth to be  
Larger one-third ; new pastures, bare and stript,  
And seas with their first loosened fury whipt,  
He clad and calmed, to flocks and fishes free.  
As far as Yima went to thee I go.  
What found he in that fiery tide of light  
More than in thy heart burneth me as white  
And strong, beloved ? To such a striving might,  
I stretch the circuit of the heavens, the night  
And day, full sea and earth, and winds that blow.

*Another is a Buddhist story of the Buddha in the Bodisat state, that is, during one of his many lives while in transition unto the perfect Buddha :*

They came to the Blessed Bodisat, declaring  
The water gone, the caravan panting athirst.  
“ The good is always by,” said he ; “ dig first  
Just at your stand.” So did they, and slowly baring  
In the soft earth a rock, they stopped, despairing  
Of what might be. “ Deeper !” “ The rock !” “ The worst  
And best is here. Strike !” Then burst  
The water through the shivered flint unsparing.  
“ Ah,” said the wise and good one, “ in dry sand

Dig ye but deep, and at your very feet—  
 As always so—lie benefits and veins.  
 'Tis so the faithful with continuing hand  
 Applies his fervors in the common street ;  
 His own one lot, else none, heart's need contains."

*The third is the Grecian story of Tyrtæus :*

He was their fate, the Pythian priestess said,—  
 A limping, crippled bard the war should lead ;  
 And Spartan men whom Spartan mothers breed  
 Refuse with lightsome scorn so to be led.  
 "Sweet dwarf," they say, " Now take thy place at head,  
 Yea, head and top of yonder hill ; we need  
 A prattler's tongue to chant a pleasant meed  
 Of praise to victors or heroic dead."  
 Tyrtæus sat, and saw the boasters fly,  
 And all was rout : then raiseth such a song,  
 Such martial music, that again they stand,  
 Shaken to shake the foe wi' that battle-cry.  
 Ha ! 'tis the bard, the bard to whom belong  
 Their victories—his song worth all their band !

*To this I will add a lyrical treatment of the same subject, which I wrote because unsatisfied with the Sonnet. Perhaps the two together may serve to prove, at least to indicate, that the song or ballad is a right vehicle of narrative, but the Sonnet unfit :*

TYRTÆUS.

Loud spake the warriors grim,  
 With many a fleer and ban,  
 And with a merry scorn—

"We will have none of him,  
 A dwarf, a crooked span  
 Of flesh! Shall not be borne  
 The Pythian maid appoint us such a man!"

Him on a hill they placed;  
 "Sit there, sweet manikin,"  
 They said, "and view the battle;  
 And when one line hath chased,  
 The other fled, join in  
 And sound thy gamesome prattle,  
 To lead anon the fighting men that win!"

All day they fought, till rout  
 Hung over dying din,  
 And shameful night was near;  
 When from the hill a shout  
 That shook their hearts within  
 And clove them, rang out clear—  
 To lead anon the fighting men that win,

A song of war and men,  
 In tones that stabbed like knives,  
 Of old heroic story  
 And mighty names, and then  
 Of fires and babes and wives,  
 Of honor and of glory,  
 And truant shame the very heart that rives!

They halt one throb, they pour  
 Back to the front, like wave  
 Half-stopped, then stronger!  
 They bleed, they win! Then o'er  
 His brow they bind the brave

Bay wreath, jeering no longer  
The limping body that such music gave!

They wove a wicket of spears,  
Throned it with shields, arose  
And him bore home with song  
Whose song beat down their fears  
Till they beat down their foes :  
“ It is ye bards are strong,”  
They cried ; “ ye sing—the soul with valor glows !”

O gentle legend old,  
Ancient, but young in sooth,  
Gentle, though eke of strife !  
'Tis he that sings doth hold  
The keys of love and truth  
And mysteries of life,  
Unlocking all the gates of strength and youth.

On every hill there stands  
At need a singing bard,  
Who pours his song like rain ;  
And with it flush our hands,  
And easy grows the hard,  
And crags crumble to plain,  
And every murky patch of night is starred.

O music, rhymes of thought—  
For thoughts have rhymes,—and sound,  
And spell of rhythmic times,  
Ye come from lips unsought,  
Or scorned ; then from the bound  
Of earth's collected climes  
Who dares, he hears,—then dareth the full round.

*As illustration of the manner and treatment of narrative proper to a Sonnet, when it may be adventured at all, I will give the following fine Sonnet, which was sent anonymously to the long table. A certain character of thought and a forecast of the story as a symbol pervade the Sonnet from the first. Hence the success of the narrative in the Sonnet-form :*

#### THE ARTIST.

An angel took his palette in his hand,  
 On lonely shores, where never ship passed by,  
 And seated on the brown, ribbed ocean sand,  
 Painted a glorious sunset in the sky.  
 In bold, swift, sweeping strokes the colors fell ;  
 Among the black-robed clouds a wonder blazed,  
 Radiance from Heaven and scarlet fires from Hell ;  
 The winds forgot to move and stood amazed :  
 And, when the flaming pageant slowly paled,  
 The sea was darkened, and the vapors gray,  
 The colors faded, and the beauty failed,  
 And all was finished with the dying day,  
 He cleaned his brushes, turned his head, and smiled  
 On his sole critic—a poor fisher's child.

*It is notable in this beautiful Sonnet in the English form, that the couplet is not parted, stands not by itself, and is no more than the ending of a long descriptive and, if so I may say, vividly colored sentence ; and yet it has an integrity of its own, so defined, indeed, that if found alone, without any preceding lines, almost it would be intelligible, nay, I think, surely would conjure up a clear*

picture before an imaginative mind; and it is of ample epigrammatic virtue to bind up the whole; and moreover the purpose of the whole Sonnet is withheld till the couplet declares it. It seems, although but a part of a sentence, to have all the virtues and do all the offices of the couplet in the English form.

With this, dear friends, farewell to my brief criticism of the Sonnet, a form so rich in resources, so flexible, so resolute, so harmonious, so severe, so chaste, so genial; only remarking that its brevity counts naught against its dignity. I admit that size is an element of form, and yet an element with no standard, Brobdignagian or Lilliputian as comparison may be; and a form may be of the most noble without great size. I will quote an excellent illustrative paragraph from Lorado Taft:

“Another most extraordinary exhibition of skill is to be found in a tiny group of bronze and ivory, by Riviere-Theodore, whose name is quite new to me. His little “Salamambo chez Matho” is not over a foot in height and yet has the qualities of the largest sculpture. The work is one of the highest distinction, the modeling is perfect. We are not very familiar in America, I fancy, with Flaubert’s story, but know that it is a tale of old-time Egypt, and that French art has of late years often had recourse to it for motifs. We know the Salamambo as a snake charmer, but that figure was trivial compared with this interpretation. The little Salamambo’s ivory face is intensely personal and real, her white bosom of exquisite form; her arms, also of ivory, are faultless in their

*contour and individual to the finger tip. The passionate figure of the kneeling Matbo seems to fairly quiver with emotion as he surprises her with his embrace, and cries: "Je t'aime! je t'aime!" The wonderful perfection of this jewel-like work is proven by the large photographs, which look as though taken from life-size figures, showing no defects nor clumsiness of execution. What a triumph it is when a man can make a little thing like this so great!"*

OF THE CAMEOS. *The Cameo is a little carving in words, a miniature. I have used it as a vehicle for one thought, rather I may say, for an exclamation, which took not to itself the large robes of the Sonnet. It is my own form; at least, I know not that anyone hath used it before. Nevertheless, I affirm it to be no invention, no artificial thing, but a conception, wherein quickly dropped and arranged themselves rhythms and harmonies and proportions perpetually met in Nature. Because the Cameo is a carving in miniature, the line hath not the large dimensions of the five-measured, as in the Sonnet, but the much smaller circumscription of the four-measured. The form is three-fold, agreeing with the natural three-foldness of a thought, even of an exclamation, as hereinbefore mentioned. The three parts are a tercet, all three lines having one rhyme-sound; a quatrain with two rhymes, which being disposed inside and outside, oppose a remote echo to the close iteration of rhyme in the tercet; a couplet, returning to the rhymes of the tercet. In the three-foldness of a thought, the development should*



be the longest part, the conclusion the shortest, for best proportions. Hence the Cameo has its parts respectively of three lines, four lines, two lines. In a short form of poem, sometimes it is power to avoid many rhymes; also it is a natural grace to have the conclusion return in some manner to the beginning and give an echo of it, and better if, being an echo in sense, it have also some recurrence of form or sound; hence the ending couplet repairs back to the rhyme of the tercet. With this statement of structure, there are three laws which I think germane to this small form and necessary to its virtue, or at least to the best use and harmonizing of it: 1. It is better to have no end-stopped line in the tercet before the third line, and especially not in the second line, for a stopped couplet should be avoided in the tercet: 2. For the same reason it is better not to end-stop the third line of the quatrain: 3. The tercet may encroach on the quatrain for reason, and if it be managed well, but never to the extent of a whole line; and the same is true of encroachment of the quatrain on the couplet—but this latter over-running requires the most satisfying conditions and handling, else it will be bad in effect. The third law is the most important, and indeed should be absolute, and in the fifty-one Cameos I have not broken it; but in many I have not been steadfast to the other two laws, and I fear often with unknown loss, albeit these laws perhaps may entertain exceptions.

OF THE NOTES FOR MY FRIENDS: These notes I shall use for two general purposes. First, for commenting. I

shall comment to you on my own work just as freely as if it were another's work. The comments will be for three ends; first, to explain a Sonnet in any manner, as to its meaning, object, logic of treatment, order of unfolding, and the like, if this seem to me useful, or even if only I desire it; secondly, to bring specially into light or discussion some points in the form; thirdly, to make note of the right manner of reading the Sonnet aloud, as I may conceive it. This last point may be one of no little worth; for a poem, like a piece of music, is written to be performed, and therefore it ought to be correct, true in rhythm, phrasings, harmonies, and whatsoever charms the ear in a performance. But it is no objection to a poem that it is difficult to perform, requiring a masterly accomplishment, its rhythm being a mere jumble in an unable mouth—any more than it is a blemish in Mozart that no tyro can play his sonatas; and the tyro were but a blaze of vanity if thereupon he should deem the composer faulty in his rhythms and phrasings.

The second general purpose of my friend-notes is to introduce you, my lovely friends, to one another. I were no better than a thief if I wished to myself alone the beauty, sweetness, nobility of you, that should spread to one another's knowledge and happiness. Besides, I have a blissful pride, not unpardonable I hope, and seasoned with sorrow, in making you known to one another; for I have had, and can conceive, in my life no honors like your bestowals.

My long letter hath come to its end. It remains only

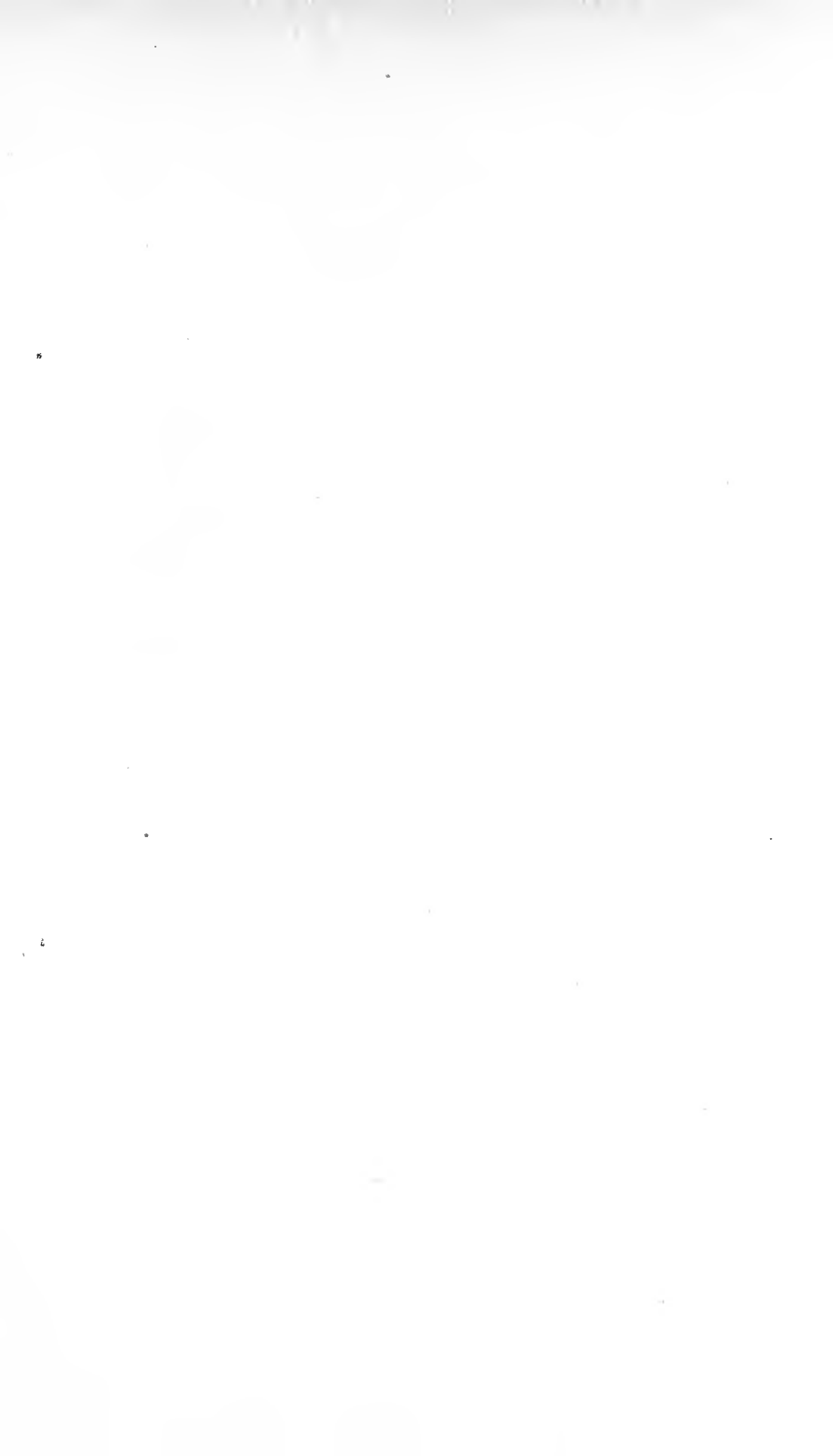
to express once more the simpleness of my love of you and the joy of it, the benefit and happiness of my trust in you, my wish to be all I can to you in every way, and my exceeding blissful gratefulness for all your constancy and loving-kindness, for the preciousness of your letters, and for the dear sacred memories wherein you have builded a habitation for me. I pray you to accept this volume from me, not as what I would, but as all I can, and with a love that were expressed little by any performance.

James Vila Blake  
Christmas, 1905

To Clara E. Miner

PRIVATE EDITION OF 225 COPIES.

No. 191



# SONNETS.



## SONNETS.

### I.

Strange thoughts of men—the new Jerusalem,  
A city like to glass of purest gold,  
With jasper walls, that did great gates uphold  
Each made of one vast pearl, and under them  
A masonry compact of every gem,  
Foundations of topaz whose yellow lusters rolled  
Round chrysolite, cornelian, beryl old,  
Sapphire and emerald that did the city hem.  
I'd give them all for violets under a tree,  
A strip of sea-beach with a lathyrus,  
East hill or west, as morn or eve might be,  
A cry of jay or owlet clamorous,  
Woods' colonade, the soft mould's fragrancy,  
Wild meadow pied, a river vaporous.

## II.

Dreams are the glow of the day's embers. The flame  
Hath all forsaken the living deeds, and lo!  
Their shapes that now lie sembling slumber, glow  
In the still witching time with natural aim.  
Voices aloud by day that praise or blame  
Whisper ghostly by night: and as none show  
Themselves to self save stript, so I do know  
Me stript in dreams, unbraced by fear or fame.  
Now of those visions let my soul be still,  
Still, thankful, and fearful; and let no mind  
In mire that wallows look for phantoms clean.  
For I can call me angels when I will,  
And never imps by night to me inclined  
But whom by day my soul hath sought and seen.



### III.

If kings ask leave, and virtues hesitate,  
And "they do love who quake to say they love,"  
How comes it I these dignitaries shove  
Straightly aside, and match me with heart's mate?  
I dare my fervor, I whom many hate;  
And ask no leave, but perch my heart above  
To draw the nesting of the mourning dove  
Of all my life's devotion passionate.  
How comes it I to be so loving dare,  
And such a freedom make, and am so brave?  
That is no question, nor doth give me care.  
Thus I reply: The love I give and gave  
I do bestow without a thought to spare  
Upon return. None fear who nothing crave.

#### IV.

It is high royalty to love a Queen,  
Who is so far that I am still more far;  
As if I did aspire me to a star  
That looketh downward but not me hath seen.  
When such infinities do lie between  
And break like seas upon a sandy bar  
Where I do live, it doth not pale nor mar  
My love's perfection that I love my Queen.  
If I so low do shoot my love so high,  
'Tis like an arrow winged with such a force  
As doth enflame it on the yielding air.  
So when my love attaineth to that sky,  
It hath a fire engendered in its course,  
That 'tis not cast from heaven, but let stay there.

V.

Sweet friend, in many a troop perverse I find  
A melancholy brood about me play—  
Of slender gains hard got, and long delay,  
Travail of alien toils, lone griefs of mind,  
Farewells of love, foes fell in plots combined,  
Remembered smiles that melted soon away,  
Forgetful nights too brief, too long the day.  
Sweet follies foiled, which fled, the soul is blind.  
Then rose thy kind love on me like a star,  
Or like the heavens that to one luster grow  
Because so full with lights they crowded are.  
And then the space of all my ills took hue  
Like sky's sun-absent tincture, where shine so  
Thine eyes of love as stars from midnight's blue.

## VI.

If I be poor, what of 't? There be the rich:  
If I be lone, fine companies do sit:  
If I be in the shade, there is a niche  
That up for bards and sages hath been lit.  
If I be sad, 'tis so; but some are bliss'd:  
If I be low, some foot the tops above:  
If I be loveless still, I see some kiss'd  
And warm entwined round with arms of love.  
If I be penned, I stand; but powers outspread:  
What I have small, I see doth more abound:  
If I have little lore, riseth some head  
Marveled with gift that doth the spheres expound.  
When 'mong these thronging things I sing my way.  
I lose me in them, then am rich as they.

## VII.

I love thee, dear, for making me a lover.  
As one beset i' the ambushed world, might cry—  
Or with more eloquent tears, words of the eye—  
Blessing the giver of unthreatened cover;  
Or as a hunted bird preferred to hover  
About a tender heart that did espy  
Danger and warn him, rather than to fly  
Free to the safety of the air above her.  
Nor fended sole, nor valliant;—pride so grand,  
Loving thee, lifts me, I myself am fame,  
Moving unmoved with the powerful o' the land:  
And more than proud—devout; my love 's a brand  
From altar ta'en to ply with holy flame  
False fanes, and burn them where they stand.

## VIII.

Brother, thee I beheld entomb thy dead,  
And weep therewith. Well, tears are upland springs;  
Let flow; but listen to them. Over bed  
Filled from the hills thy sorrow flows and sings.  
Did ever fall the rain or river flow  
But it rolled down from an aerial place?  
So is thy love an altitude, below  
From whose sublimity tears run apace.  
Follow thy freshet of grief, climb up its course  
Far to thy tops of love, where wilt thou be  
When thou shalt sit with sorrow at its source?  
On heights wilt stand, the sky engulfing thee.  
So tears run down, love up, but not in strife;  
They tell of heavens, both font and port of life.

I X.

Dear love, thou art my exercise in heart;  
Beloved of my leal soul, thou givest me  
Pure practice in love, wherein by constancy  
Of loving thee I grow to love's best part.  
For as in music's sweet and spiritual art,  
If one by prevalence advance to be  
In one piece master, master in many is he,  
So one love constant doth love's skill impart.  
Never one loveth well but who learns how:  
And thou, heart's best, with whom my soul doth burn  
Each several hour, thus trainest me in love.  
Thence, while my friends grow dearer, mayhap now,  
If they do prize my love, soon they will learn  
They have it of thee, my poor heart far above.

## X.

There is a world within the world, the folk  
Whereof are fairies, canty kobolds, sprites,  
Pixies and sylphs and frisky elves o' nights  
That under velvet mullens do convoke,  
And sip the dew from cups of film unbroke  
That last for aye. They dance by glow-worm lights,  
Or moony spheres of fog, and toss, with bonny sleights,  
Each waggish cap about, and goblin cloak.  
About this fairy world is run a ring,  
A belt of bad, dark doubt and callous clay,  
That few pass over to the fairy places:  
But simple hearts, that love, and often sing,  
Blithely believe, keep faith, and gaily play,—  
The fairies know these and peep into their faces.



## XI.

Sit ye, children: I'll tell ye a fairy tale:  
What? because ye are sprites and play me tricks  
Yourselves, and with your waggish frolics mix  
My poor old pate that grows totty and frail?  
Not so! The Elfin Chronicles I hail  
For love of airy Ariel, antic nix.  
On such blithe fancies I my soul do fix  
Against the nipping o' the world's chill gale.  
Ah! little ones, in regions wonderful  
Keep ye your souls enchanted, from the din  
Where common clamors and mean maxims pass;  
So shall ye live in parleys beautiful—  
Nay, what? The tale? Ah! yes; I will begin:  
"Once on a time, and a very good time it was"—

## XII.

Thy beauty is a commonalty dear—  
Like stars that shine all night of every night,  
And the two twilights every day bedight  
The soft self-same, and the amber atmosphere.  
Thou dost not blaze like jewels where inhere  
The bitter fires that formed the crystals bright,  
The flame that melted, then edged them with fierce light  
That now grown cold, flashes to cut and spear.  
These be like to the haughty dames that wear them,  
In stately musters gleaming, handsome and bold,  
Rich eyes dropping disdain, and lips twice curled.  
Thy beauty is like sounds when soft winds bear them,  
The dawn just flushing, evening's velvet gold,  
And the round blue that doth embrace the world.

### XIII.

If I be questioned whether 't be the day  
Doth follow night around the flowery world,  
Or whether night, with sandals dewy pearled,  
Pursue the morn, that wooed will not delay,—  
I answer thus: First tell me which makes way,  
My love to me, or I to her, when furled  
The camping light's gold streamers be, and curled  
With spiral vapors falleth twilight ray?  
If 'tis my part to woo with will, hath erst  
Her beauty not pursued me, will or no,  
And natural the more as 'tis not willed?  
Like day and night, a twain without a first,  
True lovers know not either follows so,  
Or either leads—whom both one love hath filled.

#### XIV.

How beautiful and sweet to fall asleep,  
'Neath tent of gray, with temperate weariness!  
Deliciously our feet defer to press  
With forward day that now far off doth creep.  
Invoke we to our breast a nothingness,  
Yet without fright, as one 'neath poppies dreaming  
Consumes their spectral rest and feels him teeming  
With feats of might too big for wakefulness.  
How beautiful and sweet at morn to wake  
And know we love!—at morn of sunbeams fashioned!  
How liberal, flushed and fleet, pinioned with bliss,  
Hours fly above and verging circuits make!  
As love is to day's light, morn's morn impassioned,  
So weariness is to night, slumber submit.

XV.

"Where be your gibes now," thou chalked mock,  
And thy heart-sick gags? Art gone of thine own staleness?  
And all the melancholy players, over whose paleness  
Were dabbed the lies of smiles and ruby stock  
Of health? Yon old ring, like a ghost, doth knock  
At my heart strangely, with vehement love, and the frailness  
Of our mortal state stares from the painted haleness  
On the tan where dizzy phantom-riders flock.  
Have ye died, worn out? Or doth poverty pinch ye?  
Or have ye fallen and become no better  
Than your luxurious betters that beheld ye?  
Whate'er you do or be or suffer, "Inch ye  
Along," dear souls; I would not spend a letter  
But to love ye and moan the strange woes that compelled ye.

XVI.

Dear love, I do forget thee time by time—  
I can not keep how tender is thy heart;  
Till comes thy loving script, more sweet than rhyme,  
Dearer than music, showing what thou art.  
Half do I lose how fair thy gentle looks—  
Till I behold thee in some window niche  
And read thy face, more lovely than fine books,  
Learning anew thy precious beauty rich.  
In ear the sweetness of thy voice doth pale—  
I can not hold a harmony so soft,  
Till with me once again it doth avail,  
And teacheth me things learned already oft.  
Forgetting so, I fall in love anew  
Each time I have thee, dear, in blessed view.

## XVII.

Yea, I forget, yet each time less forget,  
And am surprised with thy sweet beauty's light,  
Yet ever less surprised ; so in thy debt  
For soul enlarged am I by day, by night.  
As oft as I behold thee, gentle love,  
I have lost part, not all, I had before :  
What 's left thy beauty then doth build above,  
And so in heart I grow from more to more.  
Thou art so beautiful, so true and kind,  
No wonder 'tis that never all I learned;  
I must come oft to see, as eye and mind  
Climb oft the hill to know what 's there discerned.  
In this most happy I, that I do grow  
To love thee more, whose height still keeps me low.

## XVIII.

I tell ye, lovers of Nature, for every grace  
And glory over summits that ye find,  
The like will I show ye in the plain combined,  
That mingles its meekness with the mountain's base.  
For what are Alps but the low plains in space  
Upheaved? And with what light the top hath shined,  
It is the one self sun, that hath inclined  
To fields champaign ere they could lift their face.  
The stars that march round mountain lordliness  
Glimmer lucent and clear in moorland pools;  
Savannas frame and hoist the clouds that span  
Great peaks. So—men top men, and I confess  
Their greatness, and the glory of great schools;—  
Yet cry All Hail! to the one stuff in man.



## XIX.

O love, let us amass large memories  
Of enterprises, for these be true love's wealth;  
To mix in brave things and fine pleasantries,  
Adventures, thoughts, great works, is lovers' health;  
Whereby, when Age creeps on us craftily,  
He findeth open doors and no forbiddance,  
But he may feed at his will, so happily  
Our stores keep Age and us with Youth's fair riddance.  
What though with age sweet vagabondage cease,—  
We can not dance so, climb so, as we did,  
Yet love's life-wealthy if with life's decrease  
Youth leave us fortune in twain memories hid.

Therefore, dear love, pile up occasions, spare not;  
In these married forever, more we care not.

XX.

Returned from other songs, I am like one  
Who left his hearth-stone for a world outside,  
And turned this way and that, and wandered wide,  
And many parts in fine affairs hath done.  
But now to fireside of mine own I run,  
And sooner wish 't, as I the wind did ride,—  
My one own song wherein thou dost reside,  
And mak'st a home of joy whose like is none.  
And now I see thee shine more sweet, more rare,  
More lovely than before—so Time doth bless thee,  
And graceth me that more thy grace doth show.  
O, therefore give me sometimes forth to fare;  
Yet never far, where sight may not possess thee;  
That I from beauty learn beauty to know.

## XXI.

Poor film, thin felted pulp of watery lint,  
What web is this to bear the figurement  
Whose tinctures Shakespeare's fancy doth invent,  
Shining through words like sun with various tint  
Through opal wines! If it but gave a hint  
That once on it his hand had spread its tent,  
Beneath which while it slept his fraught descent  
Of heavenly visions he did on it print,  
How precious then! Yet this scrap bears the dint  
Of his mind's touch—most rich equivalent!  
His sacred wit the tissue doth indent,  
And doth engild it from his flaming mint.

O marvel! that then he lived, then died, yet now  
Speaks me from this faint clip graved with his brow.

## XXII.

The wish to sing is with a grace endowed  
To be itself a perfect blissful song,  
That ever lodging in mine ear aloud  
His chamber fills with music sweet and long.  
The song which is harmonious desire  
Singeth a second to all things glad and good,  
Whereto the first is birds, brooks, starry fire,  
The breath of hills, flower's bloom, and rustling wood.  
Encompass me these many voices dear,  
Where love hath spoke, bird warbled, runnel purled :  
Wherefore, what matters it that none me hear,  
Since hearken I the voice of all the world.

Yet I do crave one gallant wreath of bays—  
To sing to thee, and wear thy kiss of praise.

### XXIII.

Such distances fond beings disunite  
That 'tis a strife how space to overpass :  
One man doth think the misty gaps to spite  
And bring all near with eyes of oval glass ;  
One, "of imagination all compact,"  
The poet, thinks by fancy's nimble spring  
To overleap the pickets of plain act,  
And traverse heavens on visionary wing.  
But now I have divined the perfect way,  
By light of thy dear absence, precious friend :  
Cleaving to thee in soul, though here I stay,  
Hath shown me of grim voids to make an end.

For I so follow thee, that to my heart  
'Tis all one place, love, here and where thou art.

#### XXIV.

The furious potter! What if in the span  
Of his fantastic fury he had died  
Reviled for will perverse, before the pride  
Of his accomplishment undid the ban?  
And ah! what souls have lived that close up ran  
To some fine verge—of art, letters, or tide  
Of wealth, or love—full potent, and just this side  
O' the vantage stopped, of man unknown—of man!  
For them who persevere, being given to live,  
And by a leap surpass the difficult bar,  
All men have love, and flood their fame abroad:  
But who to them that drop and die doth give  
Love and reversion, and uplift them far?  
For this they have no one but God. But God!

## XXV.

Inveterate fetters that about me meet,  
Manacles clamped around my very heart  
And pressed into its substance, pinions that part  
And bar from every petty thing my feet,  
Around my neck, limbs, hands, complete  
Be hung and ring. Gladsome and blest thou art,  
My thrall'd plight, whereby my soul doth start  
Thrilled with obedience at her accent sweet.  
O! I would not be freed. Brothers, I tell ye  
Rather I wear these shackles unremitting  
Than I would sun me in a songful wild:  
Not for the wealth of isles my heart would sell ye  
In my strong bonds one moment of my sitting,  
Nor might in me of one sweet woman mild.

## XXVI.

The day no end to earth's sweet beauty shows,  
But night no bounds of worlds where beauty springs:  
If round this earth, this sun, such fairness clings,  
What beauteous wealth those numerous fires compose.  
This glory and grace, that doth no end disclose,  
Cometh of endless love; to Him it sings  
Who "taketh up the isles as little things,"  
In Whom the sparrows feed, the lily blows.  
What can I with these beauties made of Love,  
These boundless glories? What but cleave to sky,  
To earth, loving Love's creatures joyfully!  
O this doth lift me time and breath above:  
Perforce I am one soul with what I cry  
In love unto,— of one eternity.



## XXVII.

“If I the truest truth of love do know,  
One pang outweighs a thousand pleasures far;”  
So saith great Angelo, and at the bar  
Of this his thought I ponder long and slow.  
Is't true? If true, why is't? Shall ever so  
One pang o'er-ripe, where sweet joys gathered are  
Like fruits mature, them all infect and mar,  
As one rot's ooze through ruddy heaps will flow?  
Is it that love love's tenderness doth take  
As natural fruits, but love's wound is a thing  
Unnatural, pestilent, turning Nature ill?  
But I will pray, dear love, I may not make  
Such blight o'er all the bliss that I would bring,  
Nor that bruise give that drips through pleasure still.

XXVIII.

Sweetly befalls, when eye and mind are weary,  
And eye and mind, both tired, both wink the world,  
That then descendeth on me, soft unfurled,  
Vision of gentle thee, lightsome, cheery.  
Then shuts my book, and naught I reckon, my dearie,  
But shutting fast mine eyes, and then am whirled  
To sylvan place where every leaf's impearled  
With thy sweet image in a dewdrop spherie.  
When I do find thee in that bosky spot,  
That fairy realm wherein my shut eyes ope,  
And mark the loving mirth of thy quaint smile  
Peep o'er my shoulder in each dewy dot,  
I know not in which joy joy more hath scope,—  
Thy witching beauty, or me devout the while.

XXIX.

'Tis they whom best I love, I best can lose ;  
For they leave most behind and least are lost.  
They who do "evil entreat" me wring no cost  
Of thoughts when gone—'tis tribute I refuse ;  
But they who me did ever kindly use,  
And loved me, and I them, can not be crossed  
By bleak conclusion, nor with black frost  
Sealed up, whose noon of love sad me subdues.  
They fade—'tis I go blind, not they have fled :  
But those who make a bitter loss indeed  
Are whom I unkind left uncomforted.  
I am deserted of them, but not freed ;  
Their faces stare at me when they are dead,  
Filling the air with looks that starve and plead.

### XXX.

Listening the parlance of dewy leaves that spill  
Their syllables at morning dripping words  
To one another, or lulling lapse of rill,  
Or fall and filter of rain, or hidden birds  
Of night with their soft notes, or brooding thrill  
Of hush 'fore dawn, or twilight low of herds  
Homeward, and village hum becoming still,  
Or watery hush that copse of willow girds,—  
With these a stillness doth my spirit hold  
Submiss to silence hallowed and old;  
For here I am not wont to speak, nor bold  
Unto the muteness that doth all enfold;  
But, O beloved, 'tis then I am most near  
Fit voice of love for thee when silent here.

### XXXI.

All weather is good by minding, or not minding ;  
If I at rosy morn betake me early  
Into the fields where vaporous spirals curly  
Furl about leaves and webs, I, gladly finding  
Beauty for seeing, along with Nature winding,  
Well do rejoice. But if the morn be surly  
With brows of clouds lowering, and winds are burly,  
Then inward vision wakes, the outward blinding.  
Now, hark 'e friend, the secret I will read thee  
How thou shalt walk all climates independent,  
And hold thy rosy cheer in any weather :  
The secret is—so may good angels speed thee—  
Have good society. I keep resplendent  
Good company—myself and me together.

XXXII.

Jewels glinting and clear, brilliant, lightening?  
But mute and unmemorial these for me:  
Betrothal gifts for this our day? Ah! be  
Advised what values love will feel and hold.  
Get me a thought, a great, good thought, brightening  
The earth; and weave it, vital and fresh from thee,  
With syllables of music fittingly,  
Like gem set with enamelings and gold.  
What sayest thou, love? This were great heightening  
Of dear expense, price more than payeth he  
Who brings me trinkets rarest, quaintest, old?  
If canst not make, then wish 't and find—so tightening  
More love around my heart full blissfully  
Than girdles of best brilliants could infold.

### XXXIII.

What ho! ye revelers where flowers festoon  
A maze of mocks of smiles that jealous show  
What envies small o'ertop fantastic toe,  
And mimicry of music creaks a tune—  
Where jeweled girlet and her tailed gossoon  
In such a whirling involution go  
As mixes more the cup of brain that so  
Seemed erst a batter puddled with a spoon!  
I love not such a rout. 'Tis greater boon  
To roll my wheel beneath the fluent moon,  
And hear October's breezy bare-bough rune:  
The while with my one love I do commune,  
Who with me lives by eve, by morn and noon,  
As Autumn silent-rich, sweet-voiced as June.

#### XXXIV.

The grass with dew 's not braver on the land  
Than I jeweled with thee. I am so proud,  
Being loved of thee, methinks that yonder cloud,  
Whose birth is heaven, my brow express hath fanned;  
And gentle flowers solicit of my hand  
To pluck them, and assembling planets crowd  
In diadems for me, that am allowed  
Within the margin of thy love to stand.  
When come these things terrestrial unto me,  
And these celestial things, and bend me o'er,  
I see one joy is mother of all earth.  
These I love better for my love of thee,  
And by that virtue then love thee the more:  
So all my joys grow this—My love hath worth.



XXXV.

Speak; in silent view lie vale and hill;  
Speak thou,—I not for loving verbals call—  
Speak only; let thy voice above me fall;  
Once only speak,—the voids with volume fill;  
Speak only softly,—but prevail it will;  
O speak but softly once—it floodeth all:  
Nay, mute thy voice to murmurs, worlds are small;  
Nay, breathe but in my vision sole,—then still!  
How dumb were earth without the human voice,  
What a dread roar of mutterings it were,  
What elemental travail for completeness!  
And thou whose tone the most sweet is, rejoice,  
I pray thee, that thou setst my heart astir  
With general note joined with thy one own sweetness.

XXXVI.

What matters who they be that greatness mold  
In their own hands, so be it the greatness thrive?  
First place hath this, that glorious beauties hive  
In the blest earth; second, whose fortunes hold  
Fair and fine things: and first, that worlds enfold  
Amazing loves, that do from Heavens arrive  
Like precious freights; but second, who contrive  
That happy they shall wear the cloth of gold.  
If thou of thine own coffers be so glad,  
Have I not larger wit to lend me joy,  
That know t' exult in wealth without an end  
Harbored in earth? And shall I not be clad  
In natural relish, though one hard by employ  
More of some stuffs? Go to! Thou'rt churlish, friend.

### XXXVII.

Thy faults? They are but thy dear self brought near.  
See yonder mountain, round whose edges fly  
The sun's low beams, upslanting; it doth spear  
The heavens, an amethyst cone on amber sky.  
The violet slope is smooth; but when we go,  
As planned for early morrow, up the steep,  
'Tis piled with crags and ridges, row on row,  
And rough uneven ways, and crevice deep.  
Yet when at evening here again we gaze,  
'Twill shine as smooth and violet as before,  
And melt in the soft light, while with amaze  
Eye looks for gullies feet did late explore.

I spy some faults, being nigh—yet nigh would be :  
Then leave thee, and afar sole beauty see.

### XXXVIII.

'Tis very dark: keep close to me, my True,—  
For love, not pity, that we go together  
Where now 'tis dark: but darkness only nether,  
Whence "fiery oes engild" the sunless blue.  
I am as with a lamp I did pursue  
Deep forest aisles in foul and pitchy weather  
At night, eye strained, like a wild thing at tether,  
To pierce the glooms that do the path imbrue.  
But when I pause afraid, what next unknowing,  
Around me then the lantern in my hand  
Like to a little sky illumines a view:  
I linger central in the circle glowing,  
And its soft fringes: but when from off that stand  
I must move on, keep close to me, my True.

### XXXIX.

Beloved one, I do bid thee think me great :  
Sad me hath me composed sad contrition—  
Things done, undone, vain pangs of mean ambition,  
Follies, complaints, poor wraths that quick abate,  
Expense and nipping losses, lean estate,  
Enforced base repulse, more base submission,  
Myself contemning my bemocked condition :  
Yet, loved one, I do bid thee think me great !  
For I in love of thee am like the sea  
When it brake forth from the Word of God and rolled  
Into its gulfs, tumultuous purity.  
To the untouched floods I will not second me  
In the pure love of thee my deeps do hold.  
What is the greatness like to this can be !

XL.

Is God not glad of his creatures? Tell me that.  
Then for no part may I in such a wise  
Be woeful as doth not to each separate guise  
Convene the whole, where Love in joy hath sat.  
Black gloom is noisome, lees of a most foul vat  
Where impious mixtures steam,—smut, blot, blurs, lies  
Ambushed i' the coward's beard, sly ears, fell eyes,  
Flaw, fleck, stain, grime, venoms decay begat.  
But I do love th' abundant cheerful light,  
And I do love the loving bards of light,  
Who all life long the splendor chant on earth  
That all day long from morning shines on earth,  
'Twixt the two twilights of enameled gold,—  
The bards like deeps that do enheaven the gold.

XLI.

Tell me what harmonies my soul recites ;  
O tell me, dearest love, if in thine ear  
My song hath concords and my voice sweet cheer,  
As to thine eyes be soft and lovely lights.  
Or tell me if my chant rest thee o' nights,  
If my dear rhyme console thy mind, that fear  
Is banished far, nor can in dark appear,  
And all thy dreams be made of happy sights.  
As Day the morn and eve doth equal paint,  
Reproach me if not precious store I bring  
To thee awaked—visions sweet and quaint,—  
Or not my music through thy slumber ring.  
Chastise me with the patience of thy plaint,  
O gentle heart, if 'tis not so I sing.

XLII.

Round me the waters roar in raging train:  
Far as eye sees they push like wild herds past  
And stream their manes, the boat a pannier vast  
That many broad and vaulting backs sustain.  
Yet them I ride as still as the deep plain  
On which they prance, because the watery blast  
Uncalms not love, that moots no fear, but fast  
Holds like still skies, though earth may heave and strain.  
Therefore, ho! for ye, steeds and spirits wild!  
On with ye! rush, and let your breathing blow,  
And bear me with you at your furious will.  
I shall sit on you quiet as a child;  
And ye, like storms flung against heaven, but show  
Heights out of reach, and heart of love how still.



XLIII.

Let me inhabit the inward of thy being,  
Beloved, for so love loves. I'd live where rays  
Of all thy soul disperse to spread thy days,  
And then converge again unto my seeing.  
Love is not love that buildeth double, freeing  
Each from the other for some several ways;  
Such love is but departure and dispraise,  
Perpetually unwed, untrothed, fleeing.  
True lovers mingle as twain waters do,  
Thence one by quality inevitable;  
Or coupling atmospheres, diffused through  
And mutually dissolved unseparable;—  
Whose passion unto oneness knows no two,  
Each in each found and lost unseverable.

#### XLIV.

I am not old until my hopes be spent;  
I care not what, all may be borne or spared,  
This fortune or that fame, how well I fared,  
How ill, old pains awaked, new discontent.  
But when some hopes have died, and some be rent,  
This eye is dark, the sight of that despaired,  
To other skies flown faith my skies have aired,  
The soul then suddenly is gray and bent.  
Yet though 'twas so that first I felt me old,  
And knew my years that they were many, still  
My wishes streamed—unhoped, but warm as truth;  
Which is no more than that my love hath hold  
On what's once loved, with dear undying will:  
And love unbated is perpetual youth.

## XLV.

Farewell, old friends! We 've traveled long together;  
And intimate ye were, ye and my heart:  
Belike 'tis need that now at last we part,  
Who 've clung so long through foul and lovely weather.  
For when I knew ye first, my youth's bright feather  
Was just full-fledged, that I abroad should start:  
Now I am old, and ye, like thought or art,  
Grown never old, forsake me at my tether.  
'Twas so I knew my age, that ye did leave me:  
Here of an evening, ruddy and gay were ye.  
Youthful bright hopes—gone when I woke at morn.  
Yet wishes ye flattered stay, and cheer, not grieve me,  
Stately and sweet as saintly spirits be  
Whose hearts are broke. Else were I twice forlorn.

XLVI.

Always I will deny that circumstance  
Inferreth the volume of loving: more I affirm  
Is justice than conjunctions, truth than chance,  
And love is honesty lifted to utmost term.  
Unto what man amasses brother's part,  
A brother's love and brother's hand amain  
For me, give I my equity of heart;  
Not to blood's tie that may be but blood's stain.  
What? Must I hallow veins that filter red,  
When 'tis a cruel scarlet, not ruddy truth?  
I will not false my chrism of love on head  
That sainteth not love, though blood of mine, good sooth.  
Love ill deserved is ill, like false bill paid;  
None have 't with right but what right heart hath made.

## XLVII.

They are all gathered in thee, beloved, the toilers:  
And I, with life's most honored dignity  
Well crowned, commandment of my time,—the moilers  
I love with passion through my love of thee.  
Heart's dearest, Oh thy labors! Thy small fingers  
Spoil hoarding Time of all his counters,—clutch  
Them from his minute guards; nor thy hand lingers  
Twixt twilights from doing more, however much.  
O, I give labor, taste its excellence,  
Righteously earn a presence on the earth,  
But toil with thoughts, taste pauses, rapturous sense;  
Thou moilest where gain growls and beauty's no worth.  
Dear friend, my saint of toil, when I contrive me  
Some rest, I cry thee first, Forgive me! Shrive me!

#### XLVIII.

Small toiling hands — I love them. Be it mine,  
Who would but can not spare them, far to fend  
The strain and struggle from thy soul, sweet friend,  
And, by a heart's-ease, strife to hands confine.  
How can I have this virtue? How divine,  
By augury of loving, ways to bend  
Thought like an arm around thee, dear, and lend  
Thee back my power that first was thine?  
One answer I may render: When I know  
What these small hands perform, then they in toil  
Make husbandry of me and till my heart.  
Will not this make thee joy? Will not this blow  
A power thy spirit through? Will not this foil  
Some jaded gloom that else might be thy part?

## XLIX.

“O learn to read what silent love hath writ”—  
So saith the “Star of Poets”— pray thee, hearken—  
“To hear with eye belongs to love’s fine wit”:  
Then sure unto thy heart I shall not darken,  
Nor more be mute, but in both light and sound  
My love with all thy sensory engages,  
And with a music I can mure thee round,  
Though all my voice be writ into my pages.  
I tune thee songs of love most fain and true:  
What though, pent wretchedly, I fetch not near thee,  
If thy dear eye will twofold office do,  
And thou avouch me, “Love, I read and hear thee!”  
Then I can bear my foggy offering well,  
If each writ word be both a light and bell.

L.

When mid the threats of fierce impending things  
I know not how to turn me in the noises,  
When this alarum roars, that war-whoop rings,  
Here speeds a bolt and there an arrow poises,—  
When the wild raving fury of the world  
Mine own unreasonable sally rouses,  
And I am this way torn and that way hurled,  
By plots am rent, ambushed from friend-like houses,—  
Or when my own enfrenzied angers fly,  
Or love-lacks torture hard, or smiles betray,  
And I am left, or beaten down I lie,  
Then in my mind with simple love I say:  
Look not—it would disquiet thee, mine own:  
Go thy sweet gentle way, and leave me lone.



LI.

Bright days, ye are cool lovely shadows of June.  
That fond month's reminiscence moves the hours  
To lustres that glow but burn not, and, for boon  
Of blossoms past, whole trees flush more than flowers.  
The red fruits glisten too, and golden skies  
Fall from the top of noon on fields of gold,  
And wave with winds; day's two extremes of dyes  
And the full aureate middle the meadows hold.  
June bids her semblance dress in all her brightness,  
Yet over to hang a lace misty and soft,  
That warmer hues attempers with a whiteness  
Befits youth's "dear expense" that flies aloft.  
So June, departing, with fond promise yearns;  
What loveth so to linger sure returns.

LII.

You yellow plumes, to what can I compare  
Your beauties, and wealth profuse of gold—  
To what that is more rich than you, or bold  
To make comparison? Only the air;  
Nay, also rain; these elementals wear  
Colors in perfect plumes like yours, as old  
As the first rainbow, and they unfold,  
Like you, their wealth in wilds, and never spare.  
Ye are the gilding of sweet shades at noon;  
Ye are the dew dissolving the dawn's fire;  
Ye are a vapor of a sunny rain.  
You yellow brushes, sweep my soul, and soon  
Cleanse me of what unsimple is, nor tire  
To draw me unto love of you amain.

LIII.

Dear Verse, thou art almost a living being  
Unto my heart, a spirit that can love me;  
I draw me to thee in sweet bondage, seeing  
With worship's eye thy loveliness above me.  
Almost the loving Lord of life, meseems,  
In pity of my lonesome, while I slept  
Like Adam, took thee from next my heart of dreams,  
And gave thee me to be most precious kept.  
For since 'twas so, I have not been all lonely,  
Nor wounded so but song might heal or bless me:  
If I be sad, what odds I have thee only—  
So quick dost come, and to thy heart so press me!  
I say thou livest to me, loving Verse,  
Whose love my joys doth gather, grief disperse.

LIV.

My days, ye are fell full of loud dissension:  
While rude affairs in fierce pitched battles rage,  
With one and all my heart a war doth wage;  
So each with each, I all, join hot contention.  
But never din nor wrath can do prevention  
Of the sweet quiet that my soul engage  
With silences of song and blest presage  
Of love, lifting me to grand ascension.  
Tumult and turmoil margined is and mingled  
With two proved valors to which all surrender,—  
The bravery of song and of a lover.  
By these are intervals of labor singled;  
I pause—instant am girt with music tender,  
And like to voice with it her love doth hover.

L V.

O, love, I am old! Dear, I am very old!  
Nay, thy chiding I hear, and know 'tis truth,  
That in the heart is everlasting youth:  
Kind words from thee, from me but selfish-cold.  
May not a heart in love be over-bold  
And vaunt itself too high? I fear, in sooth,  
In crumbling frame love may be like a ruth  
Of relics mid ruins where night-tales are told.  
Love, listen and understand: If poorest I  
Though poor could give thee some rich jewel at length,  
In a fine gold would I not have it framed?  
So ought my love in flaming ambit lie  
Of rich avail of youth and glowing strength,  
Thee to be offered. Love, I am sad and shamed.

LVI.

I am most happy, love, in this, that thou  
Art happier. Yet so most happy I?  
Can I be glad if thou, howe'er thou try,  
To end of time canst not exceed my now?  
Nay, never so; for this I must allow—  
I cannot happy be unless I spy  
Thee happier still, with sweet lights in thine eye  
That new from heaven have fallen on thy brow.  
How solve me this? If happier thou, 'tis cause  
I run beyond thee and am happier still:  
Then so again unjoyed, sadly I pause  
Till that thou happier be I have my will.  
Ah! love, mayhap we thus must read love's laws—  
Neither is glad till both the measure fill.

LVII.

Beloved, let me so love thee as it were  
 The last time I should see thee. O, belike  
 There are sweet prosperous days in store, and strike  
 Will many hours when we shall close confer:  
 Yet, when our very shadows had breath to stir  
 The leaves, so still and lissome fell each spike  
 Drooping, in that one walk along the pike  
 'Neath harvest moon, by woods of pine and fir,  
 Ah! had we known 'twas all! Dear, it behooves  
 The lone religion of my love to hold  
 Thee as an angel that was here, now known  
 No more—vanished. O, my love moves  
 In every fond inclusion thee t' enfold  
 With bliss, as here, but awed, as thou were flown.

LVIII.

Thou dear, why heart-full pour I love and praise?  
Is 't for thy delicate beauty? No: yet rise  
That doth,—like stars that sole to fortunate gaze  
Askance fill up the voids,—unto mine eyes.  
Is 't for thine honor of me, reverent, rich?  
Would 't were! Alas! my little worth hath swerved  
Thy love on bend far wide of that; of which  
I 'd more complain if I not less deserved.  
I love thee for the shining of thy soul  
With that sweet light subdued that doth subdue:  
Wit's gleam is common; 'tis the rare unroll  
Volumes of light that be like heaven's blue:  
As if the sun, temp'ring his beams, had shorn  
His fleece to be thy robe when thou wert born.



LIX.

Versing doth give me ecstasy of joy  
No poet lone can feel. First did song  
Roll up my solitude with billow strong,  
Flood tide—sheer music, else without alloy.  
So much doth any poet's heart employ  
In single measure full; me doth belong  
A double portion now, a blessed throng  
Of spoused symphonies no pains destroy.  
For if song go unwed, 'tis but a lone  
Wandering shadow; lonely and sad meseems  
A manly lay that hath no wedded state.  
But when my song is sped, to thee 'tis flown,  
Beautiful spirit; and like two mixing streams  
Of the same flood, thy love and the music mate.

LX.

O, he that hath the gift to stroll, tender  
Of heart, along life's ways, and goeth singing  
For all souls lowly peace, to many bringing  
Renewing joys that erst did roll slender  
And few for them, 'tis he that sole, lender  
Of power and faith to men, and strongly clinging  
With love to them, should hear the belfries ringing  
That do high meeds of honor's scroll render.  
For what is greatness? What is glory's glory,  
True and unfeigned life, unmixed beauty?  
Is 't clang of tongues? Is 't gilded fame's reflection?  
Is 't wit a-blaze in rhyme or art or story?  
Naught these beside God's works. But infinite is duty,  
And love, or man's or God's, is one perfection.



## LXI

If I do love thee, 'tis but thy dear due.  
What then? I can not beg thee give to me  
Thy love's requital, while I offer thee  
No more than is thine own most certain due.  
But argue thus: How could the noblest woo,  
If all must only love full worthily?  
'Tis a sad lower state beloved to be  
Than 'tis to love; yet how could noblest woo?  
Wherefore, beloved, though I give all my heart  
To thee whose right is still the noblest heart,  
And so thou owest me nothing, thus I plead:  
Love not because beloved by me thou art,  
But love me for the high soul that thou art,  
And then for my most lone and lowly need.

LXII.

I woke with light of love illuming out,  
That did behind mine eyes lift and appear,  
And from within me forth shone round about,  
And made the day, and filled the welkin clear.  
Yet when I looked; so love-waked, I beheld  
Risen in the heavens the daily punctual Sun,  
And Night departing smiles to be compelled  
By such a king, so rich his envoys run.  
The calendar orb had long his ancient right,  
And woke my childish eyes with playmate ray;  
But when I loved, love proved the elder light,  
And showed me first what meant a dawn of day.  
So love and light come of one stock and birth,  
Mixing to make a day-break on the earth.

LXIII.

I know not what 's more fine than fine defiance;—  
Like to the oak, silent, while noisy air  
Whips cries from itself i' the branches; like the fair  
Blue sky that suffers tempest with compliance,  
Unattentive. Methinks a pool's reliance  
On flowing o'er a blow, doth nobly dare—  
That doth to blows and stars his bosom bare,  
But drowneth blows in confluent deniance.  
I have seen dogs—good creatures—"bay the moon,"  
And critic snarl at poet, clowns at kings,  
At singers they who ne'er could croak a tune,  
At riches he no doit who earns nor brings:  
But moon nor king I never knew give boon  
Of note o' the dogs and clowns and clamorous things.

#### LXIV.

“Pitch thy behavior low, thy projects high,”  
Saith gentle Herbert. Why, 'tis counseled well.  
And yet methinks I wish a bard to tell  
Reversal of these virtues we may try.  
My projects low, behavior up, would I—  
Fame's famishing, ambition's dreams dispel,  
Nor greedy after riches buy and sell,  
But walk about with kingdoms in mine eye.  
Did you dislike me, friend? I never knew it.  
Did this I did displease you? Was it so?  
Did thus you hurt me? Nay, I felt you not.  
I bear a part,—I'll take my leave, and to it.  
Farewell. Each to his path, as I will go.  
I have you nor remembered nor forgot.

LXV.

'T were joy in wastes or wilds to live with thee—  
But not the joyfulest. To love thee lone  
Were bliss and life,—and yet my soul must own  
A richer paradise conceived in me;  
Yea, and assembled! I love thee—yet I see  
My other loves are crowding every zone,  
Even all the noble souls; and friends whose tone  
Is my ear's full-peopled world, they precious be:  
Ay, and the speechless creatures too I love—  
Unspeaking sole, not dumb their moving cries—  
Yea, and the hills, trees, brooks, a fern, a flower.  
But, dear, these marvels of beings are joys above  
Their state because by love thou art mine eyes.  
Then by all loves thou 'rt dearer every hour.

## LXVI.

Who saith to friend, "Happy New Year!" not vain  
Blessing doth utter. Let heart enfold  
What one dear thing it hath, or new or old,  
And not unblest will any thing remain.  
If one each hour new merriments hath ta'en,  
What man but once the while with sport made bold,  
But brooded on 't the hours, in 's heart did hold,  
Of equal moments hath made equal gain.  
Time hath a bounty to his utmost end,  
Yea, momentary bliss, for soul whose fire  
Of thanks hath on one joy's lone altar burned.  
Wherefore the season's benediction spend,  
Brave hearts, on one another, with desire  
Of mutual love to mutual valor turned.



## LXVII.

Old Time awoke and cried to New Year Morn,  
"Ho, thou new servant, up! and to thy station!"  
Quoth Morn, "Rub thy old eyes to contemplation;  
I wear no mien but all the days have worn."  
When Evening came, gruff Time showed no such scorn;  
"My new pretty maid!" quoth he, with fond persuasion.  
"Not new, big sir," said Evening; "since creation  
No grace have I but doth all nights adorn."  
Herein are parables, in which Time deals  
With my soul straightly, anon my soul with Time,  
To make New Year Day rich with many seasons:  
Of morning harbingers, what one not steals  
On me, year through, with scrip of heights to climb!  
What Evening not Rest's angel with sweet reasons!

## LXVIII.

On this young day old Time thrice question I:  
First this—Why Time hath brought me here to be?  
Anon the answer very plain I see —  
To do my lowly prodigies and die.  
Next, this I ask of Time —The reason why  
He bringeth me my loves that precious be;  
And find this answer ready—Love to me  
Opens life's prophecy before I die.  
Lastly I question—Why Time always taketh  
My thoughts to thoughts of God with every season?  
The deep Heart saith—Else all were mad and dim:  
The deep Heart saith that He forever maketh  
To “stand by mightily”: vision and reason,  
Deeds, loves and I and Time are one in Him.

LXIX.

I have remembered on this day a rhyme  
Of old: "Were Christ ten times in Bethlehem born,  
And not in thee, thy case is still forlorn."  
'Tis faith's natural piety, plain and prime  
And pure. The holy and angelic chime  
Lovely saith this, that in a place of scorn,  
A stable crib, he came: so do adorn  
Souls simple his epiphany sublime.  
O faithful Shepherd of the simple heart,  
This one leal way to love thee is most true:  
That now thy birth-place we avail to be.  
In living fealty 'tis all my part  
T' avouch not thou aforetime cam'st to view,  
But see thou have a manger now in me.

LXX.

There is a music in me hid and covered,  
A most sweet music, though none other hear,  
A lovely music, as hid birds had hovered  
And fall their notes, to make nests of mine ear :  
And for this music, that it must be hid,  
This most sweet music that can not be uttered,  
This lovely music—it grows more, forbid,  
And doubleth tunes, as more birds thither fluttered :  
And for this music, that I wish to sing it,  
This most sweet music, of my love inspired,  
This lovely music—that same wish doth bring it  
New canticles, sweet songs of song desired.  
Beloved, thou art my music unexpressed ;  
Love's wishes hushed make music tenderest.

## LXXI

No faculty makes everything his brother —  
Each hath a charter for his own possessions:  
One sense this pleaseth, that regales another —  
With his sole love each hath his happy sessions.  
To sight the armies of the stars surrender,  
And yet spend not the eye that kens their spaces;  
The hearing captive is to whispers tender,  
Yet trooping roars ear's vestibule embraces.  
So rise the balms, where the sweet herbage groweth,  
To subtle organ that to them pertaineth;  
Flavors feed taste; and hand in hand love knoweth  
His kin of love. Each sense his one bliss gaineth.  
But thou, heart's dear, that fill'st me all and whole,  
Dost travel every sense unto my soul.

LXXII.

Mind's images more than the body's senses  
Awake the spirit unto ken of bliss;  
Colors and flames and beams but seem pretences,  
Matched with the marvels of those shapes, I wis.  
I have beheld thee proud, like a grand queen,  
And I have known thee melt like snowy river;  
Thy patience like still graves I oft have seen,  
And thy deep crypts floods of thy love deliver;  
And by thy piety I sit me cheerful  
As low beside a spring in dusty ways. —  
Such things be recollections rainy-tearful  
Which patter songs on roofs of common days.  
So thou, heart's dear, that fill'st me all and whole,  
Dost travel every memory to my soul.

### LXXIII.

Wherein most would I marry thee, beloved,  
Save in my straightened battles to be fought,  
When I am this way thrown and that way shoved  
In the fierce conflicts of encountered thought.  
On this wild battle-field I would thee wive  
And have thee for my fellow where I cope,  
Nor would without thee in the grapple strive,  
Nor fight uncertain, nor outvie in hope.  
When shall be won the fray, and changed the mood,  
And sweet reflections to reflections link,  
Then will I show thee how a wife is wooed,  
With all the quiet beauties I can think.

'Tis so, heart's own, who fill'st me all and whole,  
Thou travelest every thought unto my soul.

#### LXXIV.

I beseech thee, soul, learn to know the heroic.  
Mistake not: 'tis not flames of poetic fire  
Scattering sparks, e'en though these fly up higher  
Than air to be fixed stars; nor is 't heroic  
To dare wounds—cowards do so; nay, nor heroic  
To be adventurous, unlawful, to tire  
The world's ear with fame of war, desire,  
Art, magnificence: these be not heroic.  
That love and truth are strength the hero believeth;  
Extremity endureth, yet not grieveth;  
And what his lot is, as from God receiveth.  
And this I see—the mighty Lord forsaketh  
Wit, wealth and power—He made them; but He taketh  
The hero in ward the while himself he maketh.



LXXV.

Whate'er I am most strong, dear love, is thine;  
Eke in my weakness I to thee belong:  
For with my strength thy strength, love, doth combine,  
And to my weakness thy sweet pities throng.  
If in my mind I have a mightiness,  
And intellectual glories me beflame —  
If in my heart be all love's tenderness,  
And mastery, and eke his humble shame —  
And if my body's life mysterious rise  
To thee empowered — so am I thine complete:  
But if I faint or fail, thy loving eyes  
Burn to me straight a help-way for thy feet.  
If me or strong or weak thy love befall,  
Then I am thine by what I am in all.

LXXVI.

O dear unknown to all the world but me,  
 Whom eke I know not in thy sweetness all,  
 How blessed lowly at thy feet to fall  
 Adoring, yet made masterful by thee!  
 For thou, my Queen, my queen wouldst never be  
 Except o'er strength to queen, nor on aught small  
 Amass thine empire, nor stoop to enthal  
 What would not meet thee with a majesty.  
 Albeit wooed, sole grandly canst be won:  
 Then recompense more grand thou art, and rest  
 More sweet than dreaming necromant suffuseth:  
 I fear with love, yet dare — else were undone;  
 Then am I kingly throned in thy breast,  
 And marked for mighty whom thy spirit chooseth.

LXXVII.

I ween noon deeps are seen like space night-skied,  
And night hath all the light of middle day.  
Where go assembling oceans by one way,  
The sandy frame of strand brims a sight-wide  
Expanse where billows dance of one bright tide,  
One blue unto my view in that one bay,  
But far asunder are where first they play  
And air and surges flare in one might-pride.  
Are not the morn, I wot, and evening streams  
That run straightway to one as water floweth,  
And do, though they be two, yet so commingle  
To be of thought one sea, one deep of dreams?  
'Tis so, and joyful lo! my spirit knoweth  
Day's light and blue midnight are one and single.

### LXXVIII.

I know not what my soul hates more and worse  
Than the pale brows of whimpering poets — they  
Who not e'en love but must go "faint," "fall," say  
"We sicken," "pine" and "die" in weeping verse.  
O fine-voiced harmonies, must ye rehearse  
These feeble folk, who swim or swamp in whey  
Like meagre curds, more thin than ghosts by day,  
Or evening scud that caps of wind disperse?  
What! must sweet words, fine vocables, and song,  
That link all men and mark mankind, serve them  
Who suck a jaundice from th' inveterate green?  
Out wi' the pack! I love bards firm and strong:  
My soul doth void the pulers—broods I'd hem  
Like bats in rosy fogs, nor seeing nor seen.

LXXIX.

There be sights that ravish the eyes of memory :  
So when on them we look, we never think  
Of other things beheld, but all do sink  
From thought in that one vision's ecstasy.  
Such sight is Song. She cometh radiantly !  
Thought in her brow as light doth shine and sink :  
Her voice is golden chains of words, that link  
With various rhythm. Her tones transporting be !  
And in such state this tender queen converseth  
With me — tender and glorious eke, — and store  
Of saddening memories scatter in her smile.  
Pleasures I need not, and my grief disperseth,  
When cometh Song and saith, Thy heart is sore ;—  
But look on me ; thou shalt be strong the while.

LXXX.

Thou hast in thee the nature and true being  
Of the elements, and minglest in my mind  
With each, enriching all. If I do find  
A light about me, come thou, and my seeing  
Is twice illumined. Or mute mass is freeing  
Music, Nature's or man's, that hath inclined  
My heart to peace and love—i' the sounds entwined,  
Thou art the tone that liveth, never fleeing.  
What fire or color, force or substance rare  
But, in thy gentle soul a region proving,  
Doth give to thee and from thee take a share?  
So virtues of the elements do bring thee  
To me by voice or view, blest memory moving—  
To mind's eye kindle or to heart's ear sing thee.

LXXXI.

O my beloved, I pray thee show me thy mind!  
Thoughts are dense things. Let not one come between:  
I rather would a wall had builded been  
Betwixt us, than a thought that place should find.  
O Heart o' me, what object lieth behind  
A masonry, though it cannot be seen,  
We can conceive,—its members all convene  
In image; but to thoughts e'en thought is blind.  
O have no thought of thought I may not share,  
For then thou 'rt fled and hid in it, loved mine,  
While passion'd unto oneness is my prayer:  
O my soul's other, I do pray thee wear  
My spirit for the garmenting of thine,  
And with thee me enwrap, who else were bare.

LXXXII.

There shine the heavens, th' imperial of blue ;  
There gleams a speck, a woven glint of red :  
The blue is luminous, pervading, shed  
Endless: the red a raiment, with its hue  
Clothing a little maid. With marveled view  
To scan the red against the blue o'erhead,  
To mark the child against all Nature spread  
Around her, seemeth miracles to do.  
No limit, when I leap to that blue space ;  
And 'tis infinity when with my soul  
I look upon the red-clad, small and mild.  
God! What know I? Where hide my face?—  
While round the red the blue doth settle and roll,  
And the Lord's love burns around the child.



LXXXIII.

Unutterable tyrant, whose legs stride their span  
On necks of knouted women, 'tis base-born chatter  
That if you heal your realm, nobles that flatter  
Will rend you then. Is 't so? Well, play the man.  
You shall have friends. But now your foes in clan  
Are groans, cries, curses, tears—whirlwinds that scatter.  
Tyrant by choice or cowardice—what matter?  
Shunned of all hearts that camp in freedom's van.  
What! Treaty with you? To make the flood  
Of salt, clean seas and these our shores no bounds  
To your ill clutch? Away, in honor's name!—  
Lest our soil quake and speak, and young men's blood  
That blushed so late on all our battle grounds  
For liberty, blush there once more for shame.

LXXXIV.

“*Fallacia alia aliam trudit*”—nay  
For pity, gentle poet, say not so:  
One sweet Fallacia for the world I trow  
Is quite enough; no crops of them, I pray.  
If one Fallacia bloom beside the way,  
Must then a new Fallacia forthwith blow,  
And that same stem a third Fallacia show  
From the second budded? Alack, alack the day!  
Have mercy, Bard; withhold such deluges;  
Belike we need a discipline, but try  
Softer inventions and a stripe less sore:  
Or save us some allotted refuges,  
If only crags, where shall not multiply  
Fallaciæ upon those Alpines froze.

LXXXV.

I famish for a Sonnet ; pray, why not ?  
 Nay, curl not, pretty poet, reproving lip:  
 If body o' me may pine to earn a scrip  
 Of athlete grace, so may the mind, I wot.  
 And if my frame a suppleness hath got  
 By choice of feat it likes, as or to strip  
 For manly tug, or riding, or to dip  
 In the sea with buffets, hath soul less royal lot ?  
 Ah marvell while I argue, song hath crept  
 Into my heart, and fills with music blest  
 Reverberant voids, my empty melancholy.  
 Go then, thou mystic thing, Sonnet yclept ;  
 Me thou hast fed ; away to the true breast  
 Of some dear friend, and please him with my folly.

LXXXVI.

Juno, Olympian Queen, to Iris said,  
"Dispatch ye now the circling world to scan;  
Find me three maids so cold and nunnery-bred  
Their bosoms have not brooked one thought of man."  
Down on his opal wings of changing hue  
Dropped Iris; but he sought the maids in vain,  
All corners rummaging; then up he flew  
And stood before the spouse of Jove again.  
"What! Not found one?" quoth Juno with knit brow.  
"Have patience, Queen of Heaven, I heard of three;  
But Pluto seized them first and has them now."  
"What! Pluto? Pluto hunting prudes?" quoth she;  
"And pray for what? Are they Tartarean houris?"  
"He wished them, Madam," Iris said, "for furies."

LXXXVII.

Combined Erinyes, fierce flaxen prude,  
Pale-eyed unbashful brow, ambitious dame,  
Skilful to void your skirts of gossip blame,  
But liberal-heedless of your inward rude,  
Beshrew me but I blush that have been brewed  
Some discords in me round your slender name ;  
For I should do full credit to your fame  
If I forgot you ever did intrude  
Like smoke 'twixt me and sight. Your amity  
I 've felt, its velvet foot — and claws that cling  
In its webs, thence shooting out to mar and mangle.  
Go, pretty brindled one, pass by, I prythee :  
I yield wide room. Prowl natively, and spring  
Where fellow rhus and nightshade round you tangle.

LXXXVIII.

Ye are a portrait gallery, my books,  
Of my brave line, and from your leathern frames,  
Leathern and golden, lettered with your names,  
Ye gaze down at me with old courtly looks.  
To know you is not easy. Silent nooks  
Of thought become him who from pages aims  
To explore your souls;—he needs fine sense who claims  
To taste the highland snow in midland brooks.  
And yet there is a mystical fine skill  
Of blood that searcheth with divining sight  
These rich memorials,—cloisters of your souls.  
Is it a kinsman's delicate sweet thrill  
Acquaints me with you? Yes; but up your height  
Not my pretension but my worship rolls.

### LXXXIX.

Beloved, like to a flame thou art, that burneth  
In the most holy inward of a dwelling,  
Where once if lit 'tis ne'er unlit, there quelling  
Every rough scape in who with it sojourneth.  
When from a raving world my mind returneth  
To sane loneness, I seek that inward, telling  
With softened voice I come, my gloom expelling;  
And instantly warm light my soul discerneth.  
For in the most closed crypt of me, heart's dearest,  
The flame that is thyself enkindles holy,  
As on an altar an unwaning fire;  
And the diffusion of it is most clearest  
Love and sweet peace, and love's most reverent lowly  
Domestic soul and home-fulfilled desire.

X C.

I do entreat thee, dear, this night to make  
Remindful image of me in thy heart  
Before thou sleepest, so with tender art  
To have me with thee for my true love's sake.  
If so, heart's own, thou wilt memorial take  
Of me to verge of sleep, 'twill not depart,  
Nor at thy port of visions from thee start,  
Nor from thy mystic hold of me will break.  
By this, thou shalt be taught, dear love, if true  
Thou mak'st mine image, that it will not go,  
Nor flee with light thy now resigned eyes;  
But I will stay, and in thy slumber woo  
So reverent of thee thou shalt never know  
Whether mom's kiss or mine thy soul surprise.



XCI.

Thou art my heart's voyage of discovery  
And regions new; for till I was thy lover  
I knew not of myself; beneath the cover  
Of unproved life I lay full piteously.  
Then freed, self-known, I burst captivity,  
Lifted me, loved thee, and did by thee hover  
As doth upon a shore the rainy plover  
And maketh there his home with constancy.  
Thence I into myself with heart intense,  
Half fear, more joy, all marvel, did explore  
The realms of me, for love's most leal behoof.  
Going at cost of love, by this expense  
I do discover love, to love thee more  
Who hast of love and life put me to proof.

XCII.

*R. F. B.*

Though I no coffer have with gold galore,  
Nor wherewithal to buy thee what I would,  
Beloved girl, yet I will give thee more  
Than wallet's wealth to gild this season good.  
My heart is such a locker as doth hold  
Two richer stores than heaps of jewels be ;  
They are my loves ; one doth the world enfold ;  
The other, my most dearest few and thee.  
Heart, without hand, unlocked, unknown may stay ;  
Hand without heart a thrifty purse can spend ;  
But if hand write the heart, together they  
Can open thee a love without an end.  
Dear, pray thee so my hand-writ heart-verse take ;  
Appraise it with two values, for love's sake.

XCIII.

*R. D. B.*

Silver and gold I have none, darling girl,  
But what I have I give thee ; 'tis my verse.  
Twice dear it is, and therefore more than pearl,  
Ruby or jewel bright that 's bought with purse.  
For if to give thee I could something buy,  
It were but mine and dear by my expense ;  
E'en if I sought it with exploring eye,  
'Twere still but mine, and dear in single sense.  
But now twice dear my offering is shown,—  
In compass small, in value double-great ;  
The lapidary I, but thine the stone,  
For which I plunder in me thine estate.  
So doth my versing richly render thee  
Thine own dear sweetness erst bestowed on me.

XCIV.

*S. H. M.*

In full a man! Mine eyes behold a light  
That is a man, and darkness maketh end!  
Relucent atmospheres fall from thee, friend,  
T' inhabit where hath passed thy master-might:  
Thy chisel moves, and lo! a man outright  
Living; nor wondrous so, since Art doth send  
A man in thee to carve a man, and blend  
With whom thou makest leap from stone to sight.  
Thy soul carves Titans; the hand but haltingly  
Can wring the clay to thy soul's imagery,  
Yet cutteth grandly: eke full provedly  
Plain speech and manly verse attend on thee:  
Glory would crown thy head, but can not see  
If man's, friend's, sculptor's, bard's, thy fame should be.

XCV.

*H. H. B.*

Sometimes they ask who is my favorite bard,  
What poet nearest my heart. Then do I say,  
My loveliest minstrels write no measures; they  
Are verse themselves, which most I do regard.  
'Tis writ, "True unfeigned verse is very hard:"  
Thou art unfeigned; and delicate as day  
At dawn, or love, or truth, thy quiet way  
Poetic. Do then impediments retard?  
No! natural as th' atmosphere of hills  
Thy spirit pours from thy far inward height  
Of life and love. Thy ignorance of self,  
Thy limner art, thy music when thy breathing fills  
The reed, thy sweet wife, home, and the marvel of light  
Of thy face mid all, these poems be thyself.

XCVI.

*H. H. B.*

If in the sky the orb magnificent  
All suddenly more glorious should burn,  
And round on such a blazing axle turn  
That all the heavens with new sparks were sprent,  
Should not we think celestial lockers rent  
To deal a fuel to the fiery urn  
O' the concave sun, and deem we did discern  
A flame fed with some heavenly element?  
So thought I, noble friend, when I did look,  
Beholding suddenly more glorious shine  
The manly beauty of thy countenance:  
For once, twice, thrice as many meetings took  
My love by surprise: then, "Sure," I did opine,  
"New heavenly fuel feeds this radiance."

## XCVII.

*H. H. B.*

I saw a kindled brand of young fresh wood  
Fledged with its foliage still; and a drear smoke  
Fled from the faggots, like a bad ghost woke  
From an enchantment, 'scaping while it could.  
I saw another, wherein gnarled branches stood,  
Heaped ugly, dry; but naught there was to choke  
The ruddy flame, the golden blaze, that broke  
As from rude body a freed spirit good.  
So when I saw the light within thy face,  
Where was no mixture of a smoky ire,  
But all was bright and beautiful and clear,  
I said, "There is no stained and sooty trace  
Of smudge of floral foliage in this fire;  
'Tis disciplined and seasoned things burn here."

XCVIII.

*L. B. M.*

If I could ennoble my name for thee, baby boy,  
Then it were mine in overflowing measure,  
Giving it thee withal, of princely joy;  
But now, poor name! 'tis like uncounted treasure,  
That counted proves small. Belike, my child,  
Thou wilt return it me visaged with fame;  
And I, from whom but now thou seemest styled,  
Anon from thy repute shall hold my name.  
But though I cannot give thee honor, dear,  
Thou dear, dear child, nor I can raise me  
To make my name a crown, this shall be clear,  
That for plain honesty thy soul can praise me.  
As innocence thy name doth mix with mine,  
So may I render proved age to thine.



## XCIX.

*J. F. H.*

Master, here be thy hands, most holy skill  
In them harmonious moved. Where be the keys  
Unlocking sluices for the prisoned seas  
Of worshipping sound forth-swelling at thy will?  
Liveth the being of that grand organ still  
That did requite thy love, leaping to please  
Thy soul with all his voice, or like in trees  
With whispers of soft winds the tops that fill?  
If perish that mighty music, better fire  
Did sublimate it to th' immaculate air  
Where pageantries nor use unhallowed go.  
Magnificent House of Sound! With what desire  
Its harmonies pierced heaven, and being there,  
Called up to them our souls that were below.

C.

O House of Praise within our House of Praise,  
Glorious dwelling of voices, Bethlehem  
Of faith's plenty, which did by ear condemn  
Our heavy spirits that no sound did raise!  
It poured far in, like ocean by its bays:  
Impediment of thankless hearts could stem  
No whit its heavenly inundation, which them  
Lifted like deluges by mountain ways.  
It seemed like all of Nature packed in voice:  
The far and near, great, small, mighty and tender,  
The roar of winds and waves, the thunder's roll,  
Warbles in tree-tops where the birds rejoice,  
Brooks that to rivers, they to seas, surrender —  
These were its convocation for the soul.

CI.

Its majesty was like as sorcerer's rite  
Immured a soul in the grand instrument:  
A vengeance was the necromancer's bent,  
But could abase not soul to worser plight.  
Its stature seemed a bodily grand might,  
Conformed to spiritual powers that blent  
With manifold voice more gloried than e'er lent  
Sweet volumes to a throat since primal light.  
Inhabited as with a soul it spake,  
And more than with a voice, being so o'erfilled  
With Nature's roars and greater human tone:  
Until with double life o'expressed it brake,  
With thousand voices for one soul was killed,  
And to kin fire submiss, dissolved alone.

## CII.

*M. L. L.*

Thou mind'st me, dear friend, of one pervading hue:  
Like to the sea thou art, whose wave is pled  
Of phosphor fishes, gray and gay clouds, and ride  
Of misty foam; but under is all one blue.  
And thou art like the sky, that doth subdue  
Itself, like lovers, to what it owns,—the wide  
Crimson of morn, eve's opal, pearly or plied  
With brinded vapors; but over is all one blue.  
Like these thy one apparel, varied seeming:  
Thou hast thine art,—fair forms with colors limnest,—  
And science eke; but most is this, thou 'rt true.  
Sweet Poesy thou lov 'st, and Nature beaming,  
And thoughts devout that constantly thou hymnest,  
And tender dreams; but most, thou all art true.

CIII.

C. H. M.

My friend all leal, all loved, my fancies find,  
Like frolic pixies, boskage of retreat  
In thickets of thy smiles, nor whim discrete  
But meets his mate in thy most nimble mind.  
If verse be unto graver form inclined,  
Still thou art fellow, awed with thought, thy feet  
Reverent at shrines, instant at sorrows, fleet  
For love: like Nature, veined, like colleague, kind.  
But I know well thy quips: thou 'rt not content  
Without thy quaint demurs twixt grave and gay:  
I 've even seen thee jeer at sonnetry.  
But 'ware thee, lest sudden thou be y-shent  
Wi' my rude wrath. No? We 'll wrangle that. I pray,  
*Imprimis*, now, discourse thy bravery.

#### CIV.

*M. P.*

Words halt after thee! They are but lame  
And lagging followers of thy most flying mind.  
Thou leap'st twixt thoughts, like feet wonted to find  
Stepping-stones swifter than bridge's vaulting frame.  
But like one thus that flies, yet leaves his name  
And 's journey's end, thy fine intent is signed  
In thy clipt parley, and 'tis an eye but blind  
That catcheth not thy targe from th' arrow's aim.  
O, I snare thy tossed words like a bird's notes flying,  
Completing thy melodies in one charmed ear  
The while with other I keep thee in my ken.  
Friend, fellow student, blest be the leisures when  
Thy humors one another chase I hear,  
Like second echoes while the first are dying!

CV.

*M L P.*

A hallowed thought of Sweden's mystical sage,  
—Thought holy-strange, dipt in Creation's prime—  
That we in Heaven grow young, not old, and Time  
Then traveleth backward with us in our age!  
Bright Seer, thou hast but told the half! Youth's rage  
Grows yet on earth to peace more young; if clime  
Of natural cooling years congeal a rime,  
To melt it do unaging loves engage.  
Witness the nobler men of all the earth,  
Who daily grow more young, remote from death,  
And from Death's foragers, the years, in sooth:  
And witness, Venerable Friend, thy daily birth  
Each morn accomplished with more vital breath,  
To show—not waiting Heaven—that soul is youth.

## CVI.

S. S. AND J. W. S.

“To gild refined gold” the poet saith  
Is art impossible or folly bold.  
Ah! yet two things there be whereof each hath  
The power to gild the other, both being gold.  
Time ever has been golden called, and sure  
An hour, a moment, may buy heaven for earth;  
Yet Love engildeth Time with gold as pure  
As Time itself is golden in its worth.  
And eke is Love’s most golden value told,  
Precious, celestial Love, and golden Love;  
Yet Time as richly gildeth Love of old  
As Love is golden and all price above.  
Come Love, come Time, who these dear hearts enfold,  
Now beam on them with more than double gold.



CVII.

*ST. MATILDA.*

Thou reverently loved, belovedly revered,  
'Twas church most catholic thee did canonize  
By Theodore, great priest, who knew, being wise,  
Thy station perfected, august, endeared.  
O, who is like thee, who so to be feared  
In love, and loved with a fine fear! Yet eyes  
Most meek dost carry, 'neath brow where sits surmise  
Betwixt two worlds, seeing both about thee sphered.  
Thou mind'st me o' the grand Beethoven in that space  
Where Theodore preached "the word," and thou below  
Didst listen rapt, he "so believed in God."  
That mighty statue is thyself in face,—  
But thou art delicate, air-made, as God would show  
With how scant earth he might send souls abroad.

CVIII.

*L. E. H.*

Years set in memory, as the day in night;  
And as the day continueth in dreams  
With sweet pursuant pleasures, so meseems  
The set years still diffuse prevailing light.  
As over dark gaps of sky a star-ray bright  
Filters into my visions, eke do beams  
Of many a stately deed or love that gleams  
From the mid heavens of memory, undimmed quite.  
So in my firmament a double star  
Thou 'rt lucent; first, sole in thyself; for thou  
Art glorious, noble, precious, beautiful:  
And once, at a sad ruin, thy spirit far  
Bent down and gave me a queen's kiss. My brow  
Is prouder since, my step more masterful.

CIX.

*M. E. A.*

Brave and sweet spirit that first gav'st me sense  
Of reverential vigil set around me,  
On every side thy watch and ward did bound me,  
Planting twixt me and cares a flowery fence.  
Thy helps have dropped about me, as dispense  
The heavens their heavens of rain; ever did sound me  
In ear thy sweet prevailment; need that found me  
Thy heart did first resolve, then gave me thence.  
So was my work no longer mine, but ours;  
And they who knew not thy strength tugged amain,  
Wondered that I such weight lifted and toss'd.  
O friend, true counselor, thy mind empowers,  
Thy heart convinces still! Gone—but all 's gain  
Thou leavest here; once had, never thou 'rt lost.

CX.

*E. G. W.*

With what a wondrous sweet sanity thou lookest  
From calm Friend eyes, like lights in citadels  
Of peace on walls of war, or like sweet wells,  
As if for pilgrims' thirst forethought thou tookest.  
With what soft reasonable lull thou brookest  
No noise near thee; but like a voice in dells  
Where Silence listens pleased, thy tones are spells,  
As if e'en music's clamor thou forsookest.  
All health is still. The hush of thy true mind  
Is like assurance, that needs not be loud;  
Reason is quiet, and thou his handmaid so.  
Rare symmetry! As sky of stars confined  
To one round welkin, that doth sphere the crowd,  
So is whole mind; and such in thee doth show.

CXI.

*G. M. C.*

A wilderness of memories, lovely friend,  
Draws me to olive alcoves for a rill  
Of song to thee; whereinto then do spill  
Mine eyes' own drops, under the shadows' bend.  
There will I listen for a hymn to blend  
With the dear pride thy lovers own, to fill  
Their love with truthful music, sweeter still  
If as from thee in them the music end.  
Yet more I long to tell my one and own,  
My one own solitude, which thou didst give  
Me in thy love, and fill with radiance white.  
But most I seek my verse with thee alone  
Still to be filled: O, thou dost live,  
And I sit yet within thine arc of light.

CXII.

G. M. C.

Over the picture of her there had been  
A dimness formed; opening the framing thence  
To brush it off, I found a friend, far hence,  
Had penciled these lines and left them there unseen:  
"Cloudless forever is her brow serene,  
Speaking calm hope and trust within her, whence  
Welleth a noiseless spring of patience  
That keepeth all her life so fresh, so green,  
And full of holiness." I wished 'twas I  
Had writ and hid the lines; yet instant said,  
What matter who? My heart doth sing its own.  
Dear, brave and lovely friend, thou 'rt like a sky,  
Two lights wherefrom, both day's and night's, are shed.  
And howsoe'er remote, 'tis never gone.

### CXIII.

*E. B. B.*

Thou little lad that now unconsciously  
Art given my name, what wilt thou think far hence,  
Or feel, when thou shalt wake to ask them whence  
They took the name to fasten it on thee?  
Wilt thou not ask, Owe I a fealty  
For 's name? What did he, or what said, that thence  
On me ye buckled his name? Was 't for defense  
Or weapon—a shield, or else a sword, for me?  
Yet ask not so. The mighty Milton saith,  
“Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable:”  
Ay, “fall'n;” but thou unfall'n art weak, yet blest.  
Thou shalt be strong. Then ask with thy deep breath  
Not fame of me, but virtue venerable:  
My little lad, I owe thee this, the best.

CXIV.

L. L. W.

O friend of my true soul, sister and friend  
Of years long past, but yet unspent, thy light,  
Though thou hast died, is a morn of vanished night;  
Thy voice, like dawn's sweet rustle, hath no end  
On earth. Dearly doth my heart attend  
The summons thine own hand did me indite:  
I have thy loving scrip, bidding me write  
In plain, true verse what unversed I had penned.  
"Do it for me," sayst thou; "It is a thought  
I fain would relish versed. To music it, .  
So be by me thy mind's Bethesda troubled."  
Thou wert a heaven, by death to heaven upcaught:  
Thence as erst here, thy voice doth on me sit,  
And I am bidden from a heaven doubled:—



CXV.

To what 's changeable, Death is colleague loving and warm :  
All grow but in degrees, since creatures be  
Imperfect and, how suave soe'er we see  
The pretty things, do lack their righteous norm.  
Death is no fellow of perfectness. The storm  
May ply all havoc, destruction be set free—  
What change needeth the finished thing to flee  
Or fear? Death hath no office to perform.  
Therefore, kind Death, thou art the superscript  
Of the incomplete, on their foreheads written,  
Like water, now ice, but charactered to flow.  
Thou signifiest that things unfinished, stript  
For a new race unto perfectness, fiery smitten,  
Now to a new degree do onward go.

CXVI

*M. H. W.*

Devotion is thy soul, beloved friend,  
Commingled with a wit so wise and bright,  
The wit with learning's robe richly bedight,  
That how to love thee best I see no end.  
Meseems sometimes 'tis heart doth most outsend  
Thy witty blaze; anon methinks thy might  
Is in thy wit, to which thy love a light  
Of effluency soft and sweet doth lend.  
Yet whether wit be fired by love, to glow,  
Or love be shone upon by wit, to gleam,  
What matter? 'Tis one thing. And thou art so.  
I am no prism to thy lights; all seem  
I' the altitude of love as one to show,  
Like to a star's unseparable beam.

CXVII.

*M. E. P.*

On thine own mind shine inward! Show not dark  
Sole to thyself, who shinest so to me.  
Thy feathered shafts of light should have a mark  
In thine own heart. I'd shoot them back to thee.  
Oft when I view thy soul, my wonder stark  
Ariseth thus: Whether the sun I see,  
That in sky burneth, unto itself an ark  
Of Erebus and consort Night can be?  
Pure griefs are refuges, not glooms that cark  
The spirit; O, then from out them lucently  
Blaze on thyself—and me. Doth not the lark  
Partake the song he scatters airily?

Thou givest sweet light, for so mine eyes confess;  
O let thy light thyself more dearly bless.

## CXVIII.

*K. L. H.*

What if two suns should travel in the sky  
On one same day; or if two moons should gild  
One night; or if two wests one eve had stilled;  
Or two easts blushed that one dear day drew nigh!  
What if two domes of heaven spanned equal high  
One floor of earth; or if two seas had filled  
One coast; or one same base two mountains hilled;  
Or might two atmospheres around them lie!  
These sure were heavenly marvels. Would not noise  
Of joyful praises to the twin worlds turn,  
And litanies intone them to the soul?  
Such is thy grace, brave mother; by thy boys  
Two moons and suns in one thou makest burn.  
Two worlds for them around one axle roll.

## CXIX.

A. L. T.

What long understandings lie mediate of content  
For us, dear friend, and how full sweet they be;  
Silence is like a space, where fogs are free,  
But thy star-heart is there when clouds be spent.  
Thy constancy impassioned gleameth blent  
In equal height with th' one star heavenly  
"Of whose true-fixed and resting quality  
There is no fellow in the firmament."  
Methinks souls that be fixed in love as thine,  
Have in unmutable spirit prodigal pleasures,  
As oaks fly leaves, but in their roots do live:  
And of thy heart I know by answer of mine  
That thou impartest of thy steadfast measures,  
And to thy lovers still to love dost give.

CXX.

Dear being, my love 's alive to thee, thou lookest  
So sorry. In all my life I never met  
An eye more humbly wistful, nor brow beset  
With more of patient pain. Insult thou brookest  
In plenty; blows, harsh voices, sneers thou tookest  
Yestreen, nor thinkest other things to get  
This sunny noon. Thou art too sore to fret,—  
As thou like a sad nun the world forsookest  
Heartbroken. If I did give thee but a nod,  
Thy starving heart would leap, thou 'ldst come, and think  
A bone riches, chill corners luxury.  
'Tis strange and sad how little thou ask'st of God,  
Or of the world; yet wander till thou sink,  
Thou find'st that little nowhere left for thee.

CXXI.

Why give I not the nod would make thee leap  
And thy heart throb, eyes glow and body all  
Tremble with foreign promise? To some befall  
Such fortune as on thee my beck would heap.  
Poor friend, sad distance grade by grade doth creep  
'Twixt us, both poor; eke now my sole lone stall  
Shelters a stray o' thy kind, whom I did call  
From street for pity, for pity and love do keep.  
If I could give thee, sad, unspeaking one,  
A meed of rescue, better than compassion,  
What could I with yon next awaiting me?  
Turn off thine eyes from me, that look be done,  
That I may go. I shrive me in this fashion —  
Thou canst forget me, as I cannot thee.

CXXII.

Peace. Go thy way. Good slave, thou hast done well!  
Poor hack, how thou didst toil and strain at cart,  
While none bethought him yet what was thy heart,  
Or whether thou hadst pains who couldst not tell.  
Thou wert a merchandise to buy and sell;  
Yet virtue thine that did e'en now depart  
Could not be sold. Where is 't, the thing thou art?  
Still can ghosts drive thee, shades of whips compel?  
Good soul, good bye! The world were brave and bright  
If every man did earn his living so,  
And give as much for more as thou for less.  
Thy service ends not with thy body's night:  
Men thou didst carry here where they would go;  
Now me transportest with sad thoughts that bless.



CXXIII.

*F. L. H.*

Thou gentle spirit, eke who art my friend,  
Thy soul hath such communicative grace  
That if thou sing, or if thou fill a space  
With critic frowns, the heart is still thine end.  
As sweet as dew is wit that knows to blend  
The lights of song and censure in one face,—  
Like thrifty Nature that through one self place  
The starry and the stormy fires doth send.  
If I do halt, or if I fall behind  
Thy sunny feet, if seem thy reasons told  
Sadly in vain, and wasted over me—  
I dare not yield thee over much my mind,  
Lest, rougher me subduing to thy mold,  
I lose myself and yet attain not thee.

CXXIV.

*M. T. W.*

Thy gentle quiet moves me reverently!  
Thy love is large, whence I thy patience see;  
For sole the heart fills full the piety  
Of being still that 's still where fervors be.  
I love a soul whose passionate mastery,  
Like a brave giant, strong but gentle, free  
Like tides and like them tethered, mightily  
How love's deep sea can move reveals to me.  
Liberal of peace thou art, but unafraid,  
And all thy gentle actions are as laid  
Upon an altar where a fire doth glow:  
And the fed flames look back on thee displayed.  
In their kin light, and round thee do pervade,  
And thy most passionate deep of quiet show.

## CXXV.

E. H. R.

"Thy hand, kind friend," said I, "we have not greeted  
Each other to-night since hither in we came."

"Why yes," saith she. "Why no," quoth I. Still she  
entreated,

And through the lamp-light smiled like as its flame  
The dark pervaded when the lamp was lighted.

Lodged in that glow I could not darkly think:

Else had I thought that I belike had slighted

Other such smile as now my soul did drink.

But while I puzzled over her intent,

She spoke again—the smile to music set—

And "Nay and nay," said she, "our spirits sent

Winged issues from them ere our hands were met.

Kind greetings are heart's children, naked born:

Words but the garments waiting to be worn,"

## CXXVI.

F. C. W.

Thou mad'st a vallant fight, my dear brave boy,  
To hold thy soul down loyally to earth;  
And eke, aspiring unto service-worth,  
Thy wishes were devout, simple thy joy.  
And what? because thy soul could not convoy  
Thy body's freight, can thought, faith, love and mirth  
That flamed in thee be lifeless? No, but thy birth  
Into a grace this world could not employ.  
Thou art to me like one who writ a scroll  
And filled it with brave visions and dear dreams,  
And memories set to music sweet and strong.  
For life, since worth thy battle, gentle soul,  
Seems greater grown, and love the dearer seems;  
And days like thine devout, though few, are long.

## CXXVII.

F. A. W.

"O insupportable and touching loss!"  
So Brutus' friend condoled for Brutus' wife:  
So we, for him too early plunged in life  
Too deep for mortal eyes, bewail our cross.  
Two households with one heart he did enguard;  
But, like th' asphaltic fruits to ashes turned,  
The virtues in his life that shone and burned  
Now seem our woes, making our loss too hard.  
What then? If we might pray, and then were furled  
God's scroll of will, and those sweet virtues dear  
Made but a little less, to keep him here,  
Then would we pray that prayer? Not for the world!  
Arise! with thanks for prayers, that but from earth  
We him shall spare, never from heart his worth.

CXXVIII.

I have been counting ye, my precious few,  
My hearers and my readers, lovers dear:  
How well the world would roll, and briefly here  
A petty number know, slipped I from view.  
'Tis reason I should love ye more, and do;  
But not doth cry this reason in your ear  
To love me more; for I no more appear  
Than one in many; my very all are you.  
Strange ye do love me so, with souls that burn  
To read what I have writ, hear what I sing,  
When all the world beside reckon me naught.  
But ye are right for all; 'tis lovers learn  
Where beauty slumbers veiled. And I do bring  
Ye love mates yours—'tis so my song is wrought!

CXXIX.

O my most precious friends, ye do bestow  
On me the immortality of love,  
And in your hearts, that still on earth are low,  
Ye march me to the front of heaven above.  
I will requite ye with mine own sad heart;  
And for that it be poorer than your due,  
I will requite ye with my lovely art,  
And in my verse make ye immortal too.  
Still I your debtor am; for your love sole  
Is richer than my love and verse combined:  
But thus I shun default, that I enroll  
Ye where in countless hearts ye will be shrined.  
Here ye are writ in Time's remembered page,  
Till Time himself default of very age.

CXXX.

To whom I would give all, so little can,  
Thee, O most lovely spirit, I endow  
With all my poverty's rich valor now,  
Blest wishes—poor man's plenty. Fortune ran  
Fleet-foot to catch me for thee in the van  
Of my heart's boast. For I had told thee how,  
If so plant blessedness upon thy brow,  
I would submit me glad to any ban.  
'Tis now required of me, and reason shows,  
Like a pale white across my golden sun,  
That I must lose thee for thy dear behoof.  
To heart a-deep this reason bringeth woes:  
Yet happy I. It is not every one  
Boasting his love who so is put to proof.



CXXXI.

Most dearest love, to me thy mighty gift  
Is my brave power now to live without thee:  
I had more need of thee if less thy lift  
Of me above complaint by grace from out thee.  
Wert thou less perfect, I more mightily  
Had outward clung, as inwardly at heart;  
But being inward fed so perfectly,  
Thou see'st me live while I see thee depart.  
My<sup>so</sup> life is strain—I can outstrain the strain;  
My heart is wrung, but I can say, Be wrung;  
Ambition's vain, but 'tis but vain thing vain;  
And love that clung hath now more tightly clung.

So thy blest perfectness that made me love,  
Lifteth me now love's very self above.

CXXXII.

I had a bird confined in a cage,  
And of that bird was merry all day long,—  
So beautiful the lustres of her song,  
Whereof her plumage seemed the heritage.  
And soon my ready heart she did engage  
Unto a gentle loving sweet and long,  
Which then at last impassioned grew and strong,  
And lifted me above a mortal gauge.  
Then gazed I on my precious bird full sadly;  
For loving now, I heard that love-song rare  
With understanding, from bars gold and gay.  
I kissed her, bosomed her, but spoke her gladly;  
In hand I took and tossed her in the air,  
With heart-break willing when she flew away.

CXXXIII.

Thou hearest?—"The King is dead! Long live the King!"  
Thou hearest not? Why, all the world is full  
Of proclamation, that as snow like wool  
Covers the land with joined frost and spring.  
Up hands, pluck rosemary and rue, and bring  
The asphodel, and boughs of bay-tree pull!  
His name was Heart the First, and masterful  
In our royal house. And he is dead, my King!  
But now, breath on stopped breath, comes Heart the Second,  
And I, of royal line, no more must weep  
My dead first Heart, but coronation ring:  
He hath brave duties by the great world reckoned,  
And I must follow where he leads, and keep  
Close to his fresh valor. Long live the King!

#### CXXXIV.

“Had I but half-loved, then I might complain  
Parting were murdered possibility!”  
I know not who thou art unfamedly  
Who singeth this resolved and faithful strain;  
But I do thank thee! Thou dost show how vain  
Bereaving grief and disappointment be  
Against a love that loveth perfectly,  
Accounting “dear expense” a dearer gain.  
O love, my love, my heart is grand by thee:  
And so, being come to love’s most high degree,  
Can live parted—since, loved one, unto me  
Love hath been whole in sweet extremity.  
Yet every hour I loved more mightily;  
Belike so love will grow by memory.

CXXXV.

Of one sweet thing I have been foiled in life,  
Averting dear communicable bliss:  
O, I have joys galore, yet to lack this,  
Which hath passed by me, makes in me a strife  
At some sore times. There be cuts made with knife,  
Fierce and quick o'er; one carves me long, I wis,  
And hath an edge the while that what I miss  
Hisses to me, like hates in whispers rife.  
But I two things have harbored for my cure:  
Here 's one—that the full world in plenty holds  
Blest men who in this joy denied me live.  
Whereat rejoicing, this I have, like sure,  
And equal joy thereby my heart enfolds,—  
That I this thing have given—and will give.

CXXXVI.

I see it like a lovely silver haze  
Broidered on morning blue; and I remember  
Yestreen enlightened me its golden gaze  
That now is pale as ash on outburnt ember.  
Methinks for love of love that blest us twain  
It beamed a night-full of its lustre mellow,  
And then for woe that we do part did wane,  
Till now it is so white that was so yellow.  
For ours, O love, meseems was such a tying  
As moon and stars and sun might hang upon:  
Almost I wonder that the earth with vying  
Of such a breaking doth not crack anon.  
But now the moon, silver or gold, I know  
Hath lessened not; no more doth love die so.

CXXXVII.

Thou bidst me sing a sonnet of pure thought:  
Not 'lone thy voice preceptive, but thy soul  
Dwelling in me; for intellectual roll  
The tides of love that shore in thee have sought.  
My love is like an ocean roused and brought  
To passion by a glorious gale's control;  
Yet bearing up the floatage to the goal  
Of vessels of conception richly fraught.  
And for these vessels that they come to shore,  
I will unload one now into my verse,  
To offer thee, dear love, its foreign wealth:  
Foreign, for that it is a goodly lore,  
Yet is not love, and will not love rehearse;  
Yet, offered thee, 'tis love's most happy health:

CXXXVIII.

I should know well that many a time and over  
I trample on the face of heavenly dooms;  
Yet this I know not; but amid the glooms  
Of my dull folly plod, a daftie rover.  
I huddle precious things like yokel drover  
That markets lambs through lanes of flowery plumes,  
Missing the modesties where lily blooms,  
And crests of perfumes on mead-seas of clover.  
'Tis mournful to smell flowers with swinish snout,  
Sniffing the lovely beings for provender,  
The while they fling their fragrances about:  
Divine to know the divine, so to confer  
With God in his least things by heart devout,  
And solemnize each heavenly messenger.



CXXXIX.

Now I have writ the sonnet of sole thought—  
Art satisfied? Wilt give me thy sweet praise?  
Art wild or weary in these latter days  
With my most wooing verse that should be naught?  
Thou hast two beauties, dight wherewith and fraught  
To think or see thee, all my loving pays:  
Leave thou these beauties, or conceal their rays,  
Perforce I cease to woo thee—as I ought.  
But this thou canst not do, dear spirit rare:  
One beauty is of color, form and look,  
And one thine angel loveliness of soul:  
Thou canst ungarment neither; yet if less fair  
Thy sweet face were, naught from thy soul were took:  
Thence woos my verse, and love will still control.

CXL.

Thou fill'st up all my memories, as wine  
Brows and o'ermounts the brim of crystal flask:  
What ray it traverses thence takes a mask  
O' the liquid glow, and, kindled so, doth shine.  
And thou didst fill up once my hopes. The fine  
Visions of youth had failed me in life's task;  
Thou didst revive them more than heart could ask,  
And all my dreams grew this one—to be thine.  
So thou undoest life, and tak'st away,  
Now thou dost go, the better half, my hope:  
But dear remembrance first thou didst endue  
With double light. Of thee 'tis such a ray,  
With memory sole I falter not nor grope,  
But walk as proudly as the hopeful do.

CXLI.

There be joys are not for me. Well, what of that?  
'Tis fine to run as antelopes may run:  
But I 've no antlers. Bird's flight were zest well won:  
I am not feathered. I' the water: nor finned nor flat.  
But these not human are. Well, what of that?  
If sighs for wings, fins, antlers, were ill done,  
Must all of human love and pleasure sun  
The door-way and the vine where I have sat?  
Fleetfoot, that you can run 's enough for me;  
And grayling, that you swim where waters fall;  
And gentle dove, your flight I joy to see;  
And lovers true, I watch you from the wall  
Of my lone cell, with joy that so ye be:  
This, if no more, my part—I love you all.

CXLII.

Whilom waked and warmed a gentle glowing  
At the heart o' me; then ever clearer  
Burned in me, to deeps of me came nearer,  
Till it made me debtor of great owing.  
First by days and days it lived with growing;  
Soon the days were countless, and years dearer  
Thronged and spake—and I the blessed hearer  
Of the promise of a love ongoing  
Perfect, endless. O! 'twas life elysian  
Woke in me when with unweening movement  
Quickened love, to grow a passion holy.  
Now what can I? Barred is all my vision  
Blissful. This is left me—true approvement  
Of my love that grew so long and lowly.

CXLIII.

Under thy light I lie like to the sea:  
To glow beneath thy ray my sea is fit;  
Regions of light on me reflective sit,  
Thy beams and beauty all received be.  
But if thy look be gone, and cloudily  
Tempest beat down, made am I too for it;  
Most suitably on me the storms commit  
Their ravage, to what deeps their rage is free.  
'Tis well with me, 'tis very well, dear love:  
As not the sea, thou canst not do me ill  
That 's equal made for soft sky or for storm.  
Go then — 'tis right. From thy dear place above  
Thou dost my deeps with all thine image fill:  
Come wrack! When past, it leaves unbroke thy form.

CXLIV.

Beloved, I hold my love of thee thrice great;  
For love itself is exaltation vast:  
This is my grandeur and my high estate,  
Wherein I am enthroned first and last.  
Then had my love another high renown,  
Impurpled more than powers or glories past:—  
To love thee without hope, this is a crown,  
That weeping Faith upon my brow makes fast:  
Then was my love like breast of water stirred,  
As if in me a sad sweet sky were glassed;  
I love thee without wishes: hast thou heard  
That more of worship ever love amassed?  
So hath my love no thoughts on me to spare;  
And, being so, it is my heart at prayer.

## CXLV

My best and loved, oft have I questioned why  
My soul that loveth thee doth bid thee go,  
And see thee vanish far and long and slow,  
And follow after with uncloudy eye.  
But thus I answer: Thou hast made me try  
The very deeps of love, what it doth owe;  
And being thus baptized, heart doth not know  
Love's selfish sin, but all love's virtue high.  
If then my love be virtue, wherefore not  
Virtue engraft with virtue's consecration,  
That hath a holy warrant to adore thee?  
O, 'tis a knightly love's most gallant lot  
To hold a hope forlorn—from mortal station  
I' the lone night a watch and ward keep o'er thee.

CXLVI.

I seemed most strong and was as strong as seemed;  
But what? Boast of a strength and call it vast,  
When walls are broke that long were mighty deemed  
And I that was so brisk now limp at last?  
If nightingale gave his unfailing song  
To the dulled audience of the slumberous wood,  
But with a broken wing, were it not wrong  
To say his strength was gone while song withstood?  
His strength 's his song and eke his song his strength:  
And so of me what hath escaped let go,  
What breaks let break in time's most brittle length;  
My force is love and what love maketh grow!  
Love served by power, but now by weakness more,  
Freeing thee from me, when my use is o'er.



CXLVII.

Two joys I have that be in one comprest,  
So like they are, and yet so unlike too —  
Twin reasons why with peace naught can undo  
Each several night I lay me to my rest:  
One joy is this—I love thee, dearest, best,  
With love most leal that in my soul is true;  
The other gladness this,—and for thee due—  
Thou lov'st not me. And these be equal blest!  
For if to love thee be so blissful lot,  
'Tis most my joy thy happiness to make;  
And this the less thou lov'st me, more do I.  
So hath this fate my dearest thanks begot:  
To love, loved not, rates twice for thy dear sake,  
Because I see thee in estate more high.

## CXLVIII.

Again I kneel alone where oft before  
I knelt alone, and once with thee. I pray  
The same vows now I did in happier day,  
The while what once was sole is lonesome sore.  
In dedicated precincts o'er and o'er  
I tell to heaven that I am glad to say  
Good joy hath led thy gentle feet away:  
I tell sad truth—and for that truth love more.  
O, Heart o' me, but I have erred above!—  
It was not happier day when I alone  
Knelt here, nor e'en when once with thee, at shrine.  
The blessed'st day is one most full of love:  
That day 's the last; for then love 's elder grown,—  
And, sturged so, can thee for thee resign.

CXLIX.

Break, old heart, and be done wi' it. What care I?  
You have been used enough: I 've strained you well,  
And ye have stood me fast, and never fell  
I' the struggle. What now if ye crack and die?  
Your errantry was ever sweet and high;  
You 've tasted wondrous joys—and sooth to tell  
You paid for them with pain: if now a knell  
Your beatings toll, what of 't? You lift no cry  
I stride you with one praise, you doughty heart,  
That like true knight your best deed is your last—  
From great encounter here you battered lie.  
O! 'twas a brave feat, and you depart  
With such love-honor as is never past:—  
And now, break, and be done wi' it. What care I?

CL.

“Put out the light, and then put out the light!”  
He takes my eyes who takes the sun away:  
These many years thou art my golden day,  
And going now thou blindest all my sight.  
No more in this imperial verse I write,  
And am too newly darkened yet to stray  
To other song: the more for thee I pray,  
From love's lone cell enwalled in my night.  
In this sweet master-form thou wert my form,  
And hast enriched my every measure writ—  
Thou wert my heart, thought, dream, my music all.  
How can I with no heart a verse make warm,  
Or see to follow dark what thy love lit?—  
Lest I do fear, halt, grope, go ill and fall.

CAMEOS.



## CAMEOS.

### I.

The first line ever that I writ  
In this engraven form, 'tis fit  
To thee, sweet love, to offer it.  
For daily thou art first at morn,  
And daily thou art last at night;  
And when the noon hath ta'en his height,  
Above it thou my love hast borne.  
As so with me thy light doth sit,  
'Tis meet thou tak'st what thou hast lit.

### II.

I met a bird hid in a tree,  
Singing: but was it then for me  
He loosed unmeasured melody?  
Ay, was it. Though that blissful one  
Not me had known, nor I known him,  
From all his trills' delightful brim  
Of music, foreign drip was none.  
So let my song go wild and free:  
Whoe'er thou art, I sing to thee.

### III.

'Twas never in the region wide  
Of human love or dream or pride  
Or purpose, beauty to deride.  
But if there be so sad a heart,  
Thus will I heal him: show him thee,  
And he will know full instantly  
That beauty hath the heavenly part.  
For never yet a soul hath eyed  
Thy grace but did conviction bide.

### IV.

No thought is small that 's love, and true  
To love; and oldest thoughts most new  
And vernal are, being holiest too.  
Repeat me o'er what o'er and o'er  
With one another men have had  
Since their first song, and to it add  
Your soul's voice;—ye can tell no more;  
The simple-grand hath come to view;  
I bless the One in all, and you.



V.

Sweet verse, my all memorial  
Delights and bliss ethereal  
Single thy measures musical.  
Thou heal'st my lonesomeness in throngs,  
And bid'st the burly noise be still;  
If I be sole, with equal will  
Thou fill'st all solitude with songs.  
Nor want nor wish nor wail I shall,  
Proof with thy smile imperial.

VI.

Four elements, sweet love, explore  
A way to build thee: First, a store  
Of lovely light that runneth o'er.  
This builds thine eye. Then sound is planned  
To be refined into thy voice:  
To shape thy feet swift winds rejoice:  
Soft exhalations mold thy hand.  
Then little earth, and no jot more  
Than just enough to hold the four.

## VII.

The new day of another year  
Dawneth, and with it thou, my dear,  
Hand in my hand art with me here.  
Declineth day, and ends eftsoon:  
Delayest thou, unaltered light;  
Or if thou go, my dreaming sight  
Enwinds thee in unwaning noon.  
Thee so I love as I revere  
Less one day's shine than all days' cheer.

## VIII.

Dear gentle girl, I cost thee greatly:  
Like some base stuff when famine straitly  
Doth pinch, my price swells to be stately.  
I cost thee fear and doubt and strife,  
Lone pains and spiritual woes:  
Yet have I heard that dearest grows  
What thing hath dearest cost in life.  
O, by those pains inviolately  
Hold me the dearer passionately.

IX.

If e'er my occupation cease  
But momentarily, with swift release  
My heart hath sunk in thine to peace.  
Thou art the sea-deep undertone  
Of all my life, most dearest love,  
And if I cease to move above,  
Down sink I to thy heart, mine own.  
'Tis so in Nature's sweet caprice  
That drowned from sight best joys increase.

X.

If doves fly out and doves fly in,  
They make a dove-cot where have been  
Convened the nests of gentle kin.  
If thoughts fly in and thoughts fly out,  
What dwelling-place they fill in mind  
Dependeth on their kin and kind  
And what they fly around about.  
Whenas my thoughts thy bosom win,  
Flown back, they build a home within.

XI.

I know not what my life could be  
Without my precious fear of thee,  
Wherein my heart increaseth me.  
With fear I love, with love I move  
The more in fears; thy beauty high  
Seeing with venerating eye,  
Fear as love's best my soul doth prove.  
Sweet spirit, I have faith that we  
Wed well—my fear, thy high beauty.

XII.

Beloved, bethink thee, never less  
Can grow the quiet dear caress  
Yestreen thy lover's blessedness,  
Given by thee. O, grave and slow,  
As fear-o'erlaid, kindled the fire  
Of thy fondness, then did not tire,  
And with a vehemence now doth flow  
About my heart: like loud sounds' stress,  
That be so sweet they not oppress.

### XIII.

I live, I breathe the vapors blown  
From arctic berg or flowery zone,  
For that the pulsing heart its tone  
Impels unstilled. But if the heart  
Keepeth my body quick and swift,  
What is 't doth keep the heart, and lift  
Above decline that vital part?  
That office doth thy love alone,  
Who art my heart's heart, O my own.

### XIV.

Blissful romance, forever be  
Light and beatitude in me  
And life that riseth radiantly.  
Let me continue by this power  
To call her Star, Violet, Dove,  
My True, my Rest, and Sweet and Love,  
And every fond name every hour.  
Be not youth's grave, but treasury,  
And love thy love right manfully.

## XV.

I do defy thee, daily Sun,  
In braver sky thine arc to run  
Or in more quiet west be done  
Than in my heart. What though a grief  
Invade me fiercely? So doth spot  
Mix with thy disk; it matters not.  
Who sees it in thy mighty sheaf  
Of golden darts? I will be one  
Whose woe 's light-lost like thine, great Sun.

## XVI.

Nay, tell not me perpetual  
Is life, and eke hereafter shall  
Persist, if here youth's miracle  
Decay. 'Tis a mean youth that dies,  
And meaner manless age that molds  
A turbid death in th' fluent folds  
Where youth's sweet substance supple lies.  
Let life be love romantical,  
And then 'tis life prophetic!

## XVII.

Dear love, what slumbers hast thou had?  
Thee with sweet image have I clad,  
And e'en in dreams chased what is sad?  
My soul doth one ambition hold  
That blazes like an altar fire;  
To make thee happy I aspire;  
Is that too large? Is that too bold?  
In my poor heart is 't hope gone mad,  
That I can make thee golden-glad?

## XVIII.

Dear, I am not ambitious now,  
And to adventure know not how;  
With day's decline pride leaves my brow.  
I only plead thou me enfold;  
No more I boast courageous fire,  
But sole to rest in thee aspire.  
Is that too large? Is that too bold?  
Thee natively it doth endow,—  
Thou hast most when most givest thou.

## XIX.

What 's fame, sweet verse? 'Tis only this,  
That others know with what a bliss  
Thou wardest me, and what a kiss.  
But if thou choose a secret love,  
I would not show thee for the world  
To foreign eyes, but keep thee pearled  
In one hid gem my heart above.  
'Tis so I love thee all submiss;  
The which subdues fell care, I wis.

## XX.

My simple verse, I do admire  
Your harmonies, your gentle fire  
Of happiness, your love entire.  
Ye make a chambered glow for me  
In which I walk about with you:  
So I am never out of view  
Of Light, though dark around it be.  
Ye spare me tumult and desire,  
And mad flame of ambition dire.



## XXI.

To view thee 'mid a leafy grace  
Of woodland, is to see thy face  
A natural feature of the place.  
Ah! love, that unforgetting night  
When we sat under weeping willows  
That laid their tips on watery pillows,  
As weary of both winds and light.  
The witchery for thee made space,  
As 'twould its beauty's kin embrace.

## XXII.

Thou weep'st! Sweet eyes, be not ye marred  
That life is lone and work is hard  
The which no more thy counsels guard.  
The thought of thee is counsel still,  
Though silent be thy precepts wise;  
In solitary enterprise  
I yet can do as thou wouldst will.  
'Tis sweeter than breath of thyme or nard,  
Or poesy of loving bard.

### XXIII.

*B. T. L.*

Of many gentle names I hear,  
I know none gentler in the ear,  
Nor fluent in the mouth more clear  
Than Bertha. Triple charm is blent  
In its soft measures: fair 'tis, quite;  
With sweet domestic claim 'tis dight;  
Of dignity 'tis eloquent.  
Then, so enriched, it doth appear  
By thee 'tis beauty growing dear.

### XXIV.

*M. C. H.*

O friend, my friend, endearing friend,  
How late thou art!—yet doth no end  
With thy sweet ministry contend.  
What endeth not beginneth not:  
It seems as thou wert always here,  
Forever hast been mine and dear,  
And shone upon my lightsome lot.  
My part to thee sole this—to lend  
Thyself back to thyself, my friend.

## XXV.

*B G. S.*

Girl of the dark, deep, lovely eyes,  
And girl of the light, bright, lovely guise  
Of tresses like to opal skies!  
Girl of the deep, still, loyal heart,  
And girl of a love not spent in word  
Nor known by anything that 's heard,  
But "like a star and dwells apart!"  
Thy variant locks and orbs surprise:  
More doth thy dear worth pass surmise.

## XXVI.

*A. W. E.*

A dear, still girl, tressed with darts  
Of moonbeams! Sweet domestic arts  
Empower her; peace about her starts.  
Certes her heart can dance as well  
As her airy feet, with loveliness  
Of stillness. So with quietness  
She moves, her deeds seem done by spell.  
Blest value, never sold in marts,  
That peace from toil and moil disparts.

## XXVII.

*E. G. W.*

O thou sweet, gentle, faithful friend,  
Whose love how true to know no end,  
Thou mov'st me with thy precious spend  
Of tears. I better bear to part  
If thou so much dost care, dost grieve  
To break the bond, to see me leave  
Our precious house of speaking heart.  
But I 'll not go from thee, but bend  
Dear years still round us to extend.

## XXVIII.

*M. L. L.*

'Tis strange, sweet friend, what ties pain weaves!  
I have not reaped the perfect sheaves  
Of thy known love till now, when heaves  
'Twixt us this parting. Bonds are broke  
Memorial, mighty, hallowed long:  
Lo! straightway new a bond as strong  
Hath in the very parting woke  
No more to slumber! What bereaves  
Me shows thee, then less sorely grieves.

## XXIX.

*R. & R.*

A lovely summer together, girls!  
'Tis done; this silken flag Time furls—  
The fire o' the season spent up-whirls.  
Now one hath gone, the other stays;  
And what shall my poor old fond heart do,  
Since naught is whole without my two!  
Ah me! the sad, the sad half-days!  
The song o' my heart like a brook out-purls;  
But where are your rosy feet, my girls?

## XXX.

*V. S. B.*

Thou gentle listener! it was brave  
O' thee to come; and if thou gave,  
As didst, part o' my strength, so clave  
A power to soul ever. For soul  
Looms out o' thee, and valiant heart:  
Sweet earnestness, and artless art  
Of being true, from thee unroll  
Like heavens. These be thy tides did lave  
And lift me up—a deep-sea wave.

### XXXI.

*M. C. R.*

Verily thou didst silver nights  
Of fine excursion and boon flights,  
Under the purple of twinkling lights.  
But far, one golden holy day,  
Thou cam'st, my voice to glean and hold,  
As thou thy saddened teacher told  
He must not go too quick away.  
The silvered darks for mirthful sprites:  
That morn didst help me up to heights!

### XXXII.

*A. H. B.*

Sweet wife of my most sweet fierce friend,  
Thy home is beauty, where descend  
The very skies to fit their bend  
Under thy roof. Thence thou didst bring  
Thy peace, thy love, thy blessedness,  
Thy sweet domestic hallowedness,  
And round me all their virtue fling  
That golden morn. Thine eyes did lend  
Home-silence with my voice to blend.

### XXXIII.

A. H.

Unchanging in the changeable —  
This thy renown. Unmutable  
Thy spirit, whether in palpable  
Fierce pain, or love. So camest thou  
That golden morn and brought'st with thee  
The fire of thy soul's constancy  
Devout, to flame against my brow  
And smite me to speech. Th' adorable  
By thee in me grew tunable.

### XXXIV.

C. H. M.

And thou wert there! Where art thou not  
At need of mine? Seems all my lot  
Minded of thee, else oft forgot.  
If I would speak thy loveliness  
In one rich word that should embrace  
Thy thoughts, thy love, thy form, thy face,  
'Twere this, thy life-deep faithfulness.  
Thou art a sky without a spot,  
Or music that I endless wot.

XXXV.

L. W. R.

"A girl that is a woman"—so  
'Tis spoken o' thee; and sure, I trow,  
Thus all thy mingling beauties show.  
A sweet and quiet certitude  
Filleth thy movements, look and voice;  
As one who meets thee hath no choice,  
But trust he must, and on thee brood  
For very rest. Thou 'rt like a glow,  
Or like mid-sea where 's ebb nor flow.

XXXVI.

M. E. A.

Thy resident spirit! O meseems  
Time carved the marble of my dreams  
To thy white image, that now beams  
On all I do. There 's not a page  
That I have writ or know to write,  
Or scrip of song I do indite  
These lingering years, but shines thy sage  
Sweet counsel in 't. What beauty gleams  
My visions o'er, with thine it streams.



### XXXVII.

*M. E. A.*

Thy resident spirit! Thou 'rt like one  
So wealthy that a pearl 's undone  
With every step, and down doth run  
Into some nook. So find I now  
Thy jeweled vigils here and there,  
Emerging to me everywhere—  
Signs of thy presence once, and vow  
To help me ever. Vanished—and none  
Can finish what thou hast begun.

### XXXVIII.

*J. E*

Thou startledst me with thy kind eyes,  
My mind wherewith as wings did rise  
And got me to the very skies  
Of comfort. For I had o'erlooked  
Thee on a time; didst brush away  
The memory, and simply say,  
"Then still I wait"—thy spirit brooked  
Naught hurtful. Not the fairest dyes  
Of comfort's heaven out-fair thine eyes.

### XXXIX.

Thou 'rt near thine end, my little book;  
If thou before wilt cast a look,  
Thou 'lt see thine end hard by, like brook  
That nears a sea. Thou hast been coy—  
Thy favors have been hard to bind;  
To trim thee to my heart and mind  
Hath been adventurous employ,  
But wedded and dear. Now hast forsook  
And left me lone, lone, lone, my book.

### XL.

My loved one own, spirit serene,  
Memory's lovely child, between  
Us giant Time hath laboring been.  
He builds a mountain to the skies,  
And piles his wall of years that soar  
In crags and blocks jagged and froze  
And threaten to love-patient eyes.  
Sad days! Yet vain 's the wall I ween:  
Thy love 's a sun around it seen.

## XL I.

*K. E. T.*

I thought my book at end; but thou  
Makest another heart-wave now  
To break and sprinkle o'er my brow.  
Thy written syllables are voice,  
Thy voice almost as still as they;  
"Silence is pleased" with either way,  
And doth with heart o' me rejoice.  
Thy words my soul as pasture plow,  
Disturb, and with new fruit endow.

## XL II.

*K. E. T.*

Delicate spirit, of honored name,  
Thy dear epistles are a fame  
If mount for me no other claim.  
Thy mind is brave, adventured  
Thy judgment so to honor me;  
But I the more shall gladsome be  
That in thy voice am famed,—  
Gladsome and strong: nor needeth aim  
Above thy praise my verse beflame.

### XLIII.

A. D. W.

Thy hunger my hunger feeds!  
Thy flights uneased where beauty leads  
Assuage my spiritual needs.  
When I aspiring love have known  
Beflame me like a mist of fire,  
Then hath thy nobler great desire  
Seemed satisfaction for my own;—  
As one who sees heroic deeds  
And loves them, with the hero bleeds.

### XLIV.

J. M. E. H.

Dear friend, thy bevy of languages  
Enlarge thee with rich portages  
For fruits of all thy forages  
Looking for beauty. Yet thy soui,  
So lexiconed, hath prevalence  
With silence—finer eloquence  
Than all thy dialects enroll:  
Thy fervorous life is messages  
From Scripture's prime, Love's images.

## XLV.

*M. M. L.*

O thou Norwegian beauty, girl  
Most lovely, down a-back a curl,  
Around thy brow thy hair a-twirl,  
Textures of white o'er neck and arm.  
A scarlet bodice, tinsel'd bright,  
That throws a touch of warmer light  
Over thy cheek's soft flushing charm,  
Sweet spirit, earth and stars may whirl.  
But find me no such other girl.

## XLVI.

*M. M. L.*

I knew I had a friend—now find  
A poet, with verse both fair and kind,  
Like to her image in my mind.  
Friend, prythee ever look on me  
With thy poetic sight, to know  
My faultiness but in the glow  
Of a transforming beam of thee:  
Till that my faults, so lit, have shined,  
And with thine own light struck thee blind.

## XLVII.

G. M.

Dear girl, thou honorest me ; and I  
Haste to be honored, like a sky  
That thankful pours to earth from high  
Vapors from earth received. A song  
Thou askest, and 'tis easy thing  
To sing thee ; for I so but bring  
Thee tunes that first to thee belong :  
Thy wish for song is so sweet cry  
Of song, 'twere deafness to deny.

## XLVIII.

A. C. M.

Let me but faithfully believe  
In bravery, let me conceive  
The dearest things that bless or grieve !—  
So shall I picture thee, dear friend,  
And eke thy lot enroll—both great  
With woman's wonderful estate  
Of joy, hope, fear and pangs that end  
Never ; and thy sweet worths achieve.  
That I must love and to thee cleave.

## XLIX.

E. F. D

Thou livest a pure mightiness  
Of miracled devotedness  
Walking on love with quietness  
As on sea deeps : and voyaging thought  
Its wealth upon thy soul unloads,  
Vessel arrived from heaven on roads  
Of love's same sea, with treasures fraught.  
Thought and love joined are blessedness—  
Heaven's infinite, earth's tenderness.

## L.

Beilike some say with cold accord  
That I too many have adored.  
My song no honor can afford.  
But O! not so! My heart is moved  
With thoughts the own of each ; by all,  
Then more by each, my raptures fall,  
And poet-seer's sweet song is proved—  
" Joy shed in rosy waves abroad  
Flows from the heart of love, the Lord."

When flieth forth a carrier dove—  
Plumes preened close as velvet glove—  
And like swift skiff doth onward shove  
His air-wave way, he minds me, dear,  
Of thee who, far by space apart,  
Dost find straight air-way to my heart,  
Nor leav'st me lone, nor fail'st me near  
By that sweet light about, above,—  
My book's last word — thy love.



NOTES.



## NOTES.

### THE SONNETS.

XV. For some weeks I passed often by a field where was an old circus ring.

XXI. I found a stray scrap of paper on which was printed a sonnet of Shakespeare.

XXIV. Palissy.

XXVII. Lines 1 and 2 from translation of Michael Angelo's sonnets by John Addington Symonds.

XXXIII. One night in my cycle riding, I came under a window where was a crowded party of dancers.

XXXVII. Under the shadows of Monadnock.

XLII. During a storm on Lake Michigan.

XLIV. and XLV. Sonnets of the same thought—hopes turned unlikely or impossible.

XLVII. and XLVIII. Memories of a gentle woman whose severe toil, unremitting and exacted, made any rest for me seem shameful privilege.

XLIX. See Shakespeare's Sonnet XXIII.

LI. October.

LII. The Golden Rod.

LV. Disparity.

LXVI., LXVII., LXVIII. New Year sonnets written for my people.

LXIX. Written on a Christmas Day.

LXXI., LXXII., LXXIII. A sequence.

LXXXII. On a summer morning I met a little girl clad all in red.

LXXXIII. Against extradition treaty with the Russian Tzar.

LXXXIV. To Fallacia; LXXXVII. to the same. Terent., Andria, Act IV., Sce. IV.

LXXXVI. A fable by Lessing.

LXXXVII. See LXXXIV. To the same Fallacia—fit name, by my experience: otherwise "*nonnullius in literis nominis.*"

XCII., XCIII. To my daughters, Rachel Frazier and Ruth Deering, for a Christmas gift, 1896.

XCIV. Sidney H. Morse. To those who know him I need say no more; to those who know him not, I could not say enough in volumes.

XCV., XCVI., XCVII. Horace H. Badger.

XCVIII. Lowell Blake Mason, son of Hon. W. E. Mason, U. S. Senator, and Julia Edith White; my god-child in the middle name.

XCIX. J. Franklin Hughes, a musician of elevated and beautiful gift. The grand organ by which he discoursed eloquently in my church, was destroyed by fire, in October, 1896—Sonnets C., CI.

CII. Mary L. Lord. Cameo XXVIII.

CIII. Clara H. (Perkins) Mahony. See Dedication. Cameo XXXIV.

CIV. Myra Perkins.

CV. Mary L. Perkins, the venerable mother of the two fore-mentioned sisters, distinguished by the old-time lovely and elevated manners joined with fervor of heart and fine mind. This sonnet was written for her eightieth birthday.

CVI. Silvanus Smith and Judith W. McLauthlin.—their golden wedding, November 25, 1891.

CVII. Matilda Goddard. Theodore Parker called her St. Matilda, and her friends seized on the fitting name. Crawford's noble statue of Beethoven stood on the platform of the Boston Music Hall, where Theodore Parker preached.

CVIII. Licinia E. Hilton. For her brother, see XCV.

CIX. M. Estella Austin—*mea libraria, condiscipula etiam carissima et honoratissima. Beati ab illa qui honorati sint.* Cameos XXXVI., XXXVII.

- CX. Eva G. Wanzer. Cameo XXVII.  
 CXI., CXII. Grace M. Curtis—*In Memoriam*.  
 CXIII. Emerson Blake Bushnell, son of Rev. Charles F. Bushnell and Margaret Dreutlein; my god-child in the middle name.  
 CXIV. Louisa L. Ware. She asked me to make a sonnet of a thought in a writing which I had sent to her: CXV. the thought.  
 CXVI. Mary H. Ware—sister of Louisa L.  
 CXVII. M. Emma Powers.  
 CXVIII. Katharine L. Halpin, at birth of her twin boys.  
 CXIX. Alice L. Taylor.  
 CXX., CXXI. To a vagrant dog. I place these among my personal sonnets at bidding (in which I concur heartily) of my friend (Sonnet CII.) who, returning me some manuscripts, said, "Here are all the personal sonnets with names—unless you will put those to the vagrant dog among the personal; and I think you ought to." The same applies to CXXII.  
 CXXII. To a horse lying in the street, having died there.  
 CXXIII. Frederick L. Hosmer—on occasion of his criticism of some of my verse. I will not let go by the opportunity to express my love of his hymns. He has not written very many—"soul-animating strains alas! too few;" but for quality I deem him among the few most precious hymnists of the world.  
 CXXIV. Martha T. Welch.  
 CXXV. Emma H. Roche, wife of Hon. John A. Roche.  
 CXXVI. Frederick C. Wilson. *In Memoriam*.  
 CXXVII. Frank A. Wait. *In Memoriam*.  
 CXXX.—CL. A song of farewell.  
 CXXXIV. I met the two beautiful lines that open this sonnet in a book unfamed, and to me unknown, which I opened by chance at a book stall.  
 CXXXVII.—CXXXIX. A Command, the Obedience, Afterthought.  
 CXLII. Trochaic.  
 CXLIII. For the imagery of this sonnet I am indebted to a

sonnet on Abraham Lincoln, by Richard Watson Gilder, in which he finely speaks of Lincoln as

"That spirit fit for sorrow, as the sea  
For storms to beat on."

See Higginson's "American Sonnets," p. 82.

#### THE CAMEOS.

XXIII. Bertha T. Lewis.

XXIV. Minnie C. Hughes.

XXV. Belle G. Scribner.

XXVI. Anna W. Edwards. See XXXVIII., Sisters.

XXVII. See Sonnet CX. This number and XXVIII., XXXI., refer to my parting from my church.

XXVIII. See Sonnet CII.

XXIX. See Sonnets XCII., XCIII.

XXX. Virginia S. Brannon. The courage of conviction, of thought, and of *choice of a church*, is no small valor.

XXXI. Minnie C. Reuter. There were fine wheel-rides the Summer of 1897. This number and XXXII., XXXIII., XXXIV., refer to a certain radiant Autumnal Sunday, when these and one other (XXX.) went to listen to me at Evanston.

XXXII. Anna H. Bregger.

XXXIII. Alice Hayward.

XXXIV. See Sonnet CIII.

XXXV. Louise W. Russell.

XXXVI., XXXVII. See Sonnet CIX.

XXXVIII. Jennie Edwards. See XXVI., Sisters.

XXI., XLII. Katherine E. Tuley, wife of Hon. Judge Tuley. In XLII the reader naturally will be careful to make music with the last syllable (*ed*) in lines 4 and 7.

XLIII. Alice D. Wiley.

XLIV. Julia M. E. Hintermeister.

XLV., XLVI. Marion M. Lewis.

XLVII. Georgine Mahony.

XLVIII. Agnes C. Montgomery.

XLIX. Eva F. Davis.

NOTES FOR MY FRIENDS.





## NOTES FOR MY FRIENDS.

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I. Description alone is not proper to a Sonnet, as I think. For either the space of the Sonnet must be too small for the details, or else the object is not worthy substance for the Sonnet. But the case is different when the details are not for themselves, but as only a special vocabulary, brief perhaps, of a thought. See remarks on this point in "Letter."

II. A friend writing to me of this Sonnet has said: "De Quincey says the plowman would dream of huge plows, enormous oxen, furrows like river beds; but the philosopher would dream of transcendent things, and tread the grand path to the borders of the infinite—or words to that effect. I never could quote. You have an equally forceful and more beautiful way of uttering this deep truth. It has a quiet beauty."

IV. A note from a friend says: "The second line is very telling. What a touching and dignified humility. I would venture to change, 'but let stay there.' It is too commonplace an ending to a Sonnet of fancy and sentiment."

V. The phrasing in this Sonnet is to be noted; first, for its variety down to the last line of the octave; secondly, for the contrast, suitable to the change of thought, of the long phrasings with the short of octave.

VI. The form of this Sonnet is to be noted, because of the phrasing. Every quatrain hath the same phrasing, which is

varied in every line of the quatrain, and the last line thereof is all one without pause. Some assert that every line of the heroic form has the pause—*cæsura*; but I am persuaded that it is one of the varieties of that pause, whereof composers may avail themselves, that a line may have no pause at all and should be read, as it were, at a breath, or with one unfaltering stream of tone; and this may extend to a phrase longer than an entire line, affording, when contrasted suitably with shorter phrases, a fine effect and beauty by reason of a rolling maintenance of utterance like a long billow. Note, then, in this Sonnet that the first line has three phrases, whereof the first and third have equal length, turning on a middle short. The second line has two phrases, of which the first is like the main phrases of first line. The third line has one phrase, like the second phrase of the second line; and then begins a long rolling phrase without drop to the end of the quatrain. Each quatrain having re-echoed this phrasing exactly, the couplet then comes with a new phrasing all its own. The first couplet line is one phrase unbroken, and the second has two phrasings equal in length but varied in accent, and both of them differing from any other phrase of the Sonnet. I think this a very beautiful structure of phrases, very easy of pleasing elocution; and no sacrifice is made for it, for neither is the sense obscured nor diction forced. For another treatment of the thought of this Sonnet, see XXXVI.

VII. Herein I wished to assert four great privileges and blessednesses of love, namely, that it is shelter, that it is courage, also hath a grand pride, and a pure piety.

IX. Of this a friend has said: "There is a deference so real in this Sonnet that it adds a beauty." I may claim this—'Tis sincere, being a conversion of reverence into thought, and both into form.

XIV. Will you look for and find, dear my friend-reader, the internal harmonies in this Sonnet—alternately rhymed quatrains of sound, woven into each four lines, and a couplet into the last two, the line-end harmonies of the Italian form proceeding meantime. Compare also LXXVII. I will add another example here, the following Sonnet, one which I had forgotten but found after this book had been finished. I know not that I should have included it even if found in time—very likely not; yet I will offer it as another example of internal echoes at the same places in the lines:

In sweet surprises kindness lies full dearly,  
 In kindness then surprise lurks, so I ween;  
 "How may that be?" thy kindness cries. Ah! clearly  
 How wonder in all love works may be seen.  
 What is so great as love? Speak, if thou know it!  
 What glory is like to love's glory?—Aught?  
 Burn more the heavens above? Declare and show it!  
 What story is like to love's story? Naught.  
 Who can sufficient be for this great thing?  
 Whoso loves worthily will bend and pray—  
 With awe and wonder see love to him cling,  
 As pools still lowlily repeat the day.  
 Love is devout, with holy amazement moved:  
 His love is out who is not awed, being loved.

XV. Of this a comrade has written me: "There is therein an old touch of human affection such as I always find on the pages of St. Solifer. Not one of the whole collection has more charms within itself." I will accept the valuation thankfully. The Sonnet has a certain dearness to my heart. I never looked without emotion on the old circus-ring that bred the Sonnet.

XXII. A song of song, and even of the wish to sing. This runs here into a love. I have happened among my papers on two lyrics of a like thought, which I had forgotten entirely, and I will insert them here:

## A VISIT.

O what a thought! Quick, hand, take pen! Sing!  
 Prison this theme and make it fast in verse  
 Ere it betake itself on mocking wing  
     To vanish, disperse.

I am o'erflowed with joy, the trees with bloom,  
 All voices sing, brooks loosen, flowers blow  
 By this great thought, whose call through every gloom  
     Proclaimeth 'tis so.

I think this air I breathe is all alive:  
 I think the earth, not I, lifteth my feet  
 And makes them move; I think all beings strive  
     My pleasure to meet!

The sky is all aflame with this wide thought,  
 Th' exalted heavens dissolve, and men are left  
 Alone with God, and all the soul, full-fraught,  
     With glory is cleft.

Hand write, eye look, ear listen and voice shout,  
 And all begin the song in me hath sprung!  
 I have forgot what I should sing about:  
     No matter; 'tis sung.

## FORTH!

Sing me a song of the song!  
     Awake my soul, I say,  
     Sing me a matin lay;  
 For the morn's awake and abroad, and I am strong.

Try not to sing the day;  
     Can thy two open eyes  
     See round the all-round skies?  
 Canst sing the glorious morn with all thy lay?

As when a song of old  
     The stars of morning sung,  
     New-made and high up-hung,  
 To sing the stars that sang would'st thou be bold?

Or if "the sons of God  
 Shouted for joy," and sang  
 Till new creation rang,  
 Dar'st thou, to sing these sons, pour song abroad?  
 And when the hill-tops flame,  
 Like Sinai, to display  
 Eternal laws, new day,  
 These dar'st thou try proclaim, that God proclaim?  
 Nay, nay, not these my song  
 Will dare; but a song I bring  
 Of the song I can not sing;  
 For the morn's awake and abroad, and I am strong.

XXIV. A friend has surprised me with these words of this Sonnet: "There appears to me a deeper feeling in this poem than such an alien subject should inspire. Whether it is the force and swing of these lines or not, I shall always think this is one of the poems into which some heartfelt expression has gone—an expression that could not be made in plainly directed words. *Syrinx* is a song of your heart, as this is. This is magnificent."

XXIX. Line seven is measured thus:

♩ | ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ||

XXX. Of this says one friend: "A very peculiar Sonnet. I do not feel I understand certainly what you mean. If I were told to write the thought I should do it thus: 'Listening with all of these (the leaves, etc.) my spirit is held by a stillness and made submissive to silence. But while thus mute I am most fit to voice my love for you.' Now, if this be the thought, I must submit that the form is very difficult. The first eight lines give no clue to the subject of listening the opening word. In the ninth line you are perplexed with the question, 'Does Stillness hold the spirit submiss to Silence, or does the spirit hold Stillness submiss to Silence?' The thought of the ending couplet is exquisite when conceived, but ambiguous as written. 'Fit

voice' is not poetical enough for such a delicate thought. The form of the Sonnet is not good—that is, I mean the succession of phrases is displeasing—too long drawn out. But it has none the less a beauty that makes it worth the reading and study. Perfectly delightful is 'Of dewy leaves,' etc., and the phrases following are truly and decidedly poetical."

Of this judgment another says: "I have read this many times, unable to come to any definite conclusion. I find no obscurity such as our friend seems to find; but I agree with him in naming it most peculiar. The first four lines are exquisite in sound and in descriptive power; but after that there seems to be a sudden decline, not so much because the lines are poorer in quality, as because they pall upon the mind. The first four and a half lines seem to be enough." From this latter judgment another friend dissents. I leave all standing as they have expressed themselves.

XXXI. As first written I had the expression "eye-brow clouds" in seventh line, figuring the clouds as the brows of the sun-eye. On this I have had comments as follows:

"This has several beauties and is musical in an unusual degree. It is the only one of the collection in which I should pass 'eye-brow clouds.' But that phrase seems eminently in place here. I like the dignified humor of the ending. The remarkable rhyming here has not discomposed your thought, for I do not detect any attempt at forcing. The virtues of the thing do not dawn on you for a long time. The thought is a wholesome one."

Another writes: "I like this—all but 'eye-brow clouds.' I cannot agree with our friend. The expression spoils the Sonnet for me. The more I read it the less I like it—in that one expression."

XXXII. I know not what you will say, my friends, of this departure from the honored form; but I will quote one of you to all of you:

"While the Sonnet is irregular, I think it is one of those instances where the usual form has been safely departed from. The treatment is good. The rhyming is splendidly managed, leaving the noble thought to be sustained by undecorated dignity. The triple rhymes are unusual and pleasing. On the whole I find not one adverse comment to make, and, while the poem is not as strong as some others, it is one of the most pleasing."

XXXV. I will confess to you that I take great pleasure and find a very happy beauty in this Sonnet. The phrasing by which the expression of the manner of the speech and voice is extended line by line, while the expression of the result or influence of the speech and voice is shortened by like and equal degrees, is to me facile and lovely for recitation, and lays the emphasis richly on the presentation or arising of the voice. Mark, too, that the sestet, especially the first tercet thereof, is written in long continuous phrasings, for contrast with the form of the octave, and for a sustainment in the closing. Having said this, I will copy here a dissent and remarks from a friend:

"I do not care for this. I like the sestet better than the octave. Whether it ought to be so or not, the mechanism of this Sonnet oppresses me. I said I liked the sestet better than the octave; but I must read it by itself in order to like it at all. The construction in the first six lines so interferes with my grasp of the thought that at the end of the sixth line I am not able to sympathize with the culminating thought. Walter Bagehot, in an essay on 'Pure, Ornate and Grotesque Art in English Poetry,' quotes two sonnets from Wordsworth, 'The Trossachs' and 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge,' and then comments thus: 'Instances of barer style than this may easily be found, instances of colder style—few instances of purer style. Not a single expression (the invocation in the concluding couplet of the sec-

ond Sonnet perhaps excepted) can be spared, yet not a single expression rivets the attention. If, indeed, we take out the phrase—

“The city now doth, like a garment, wear  
The beauty of the morning,”

and the description of the brilliant yellow of autumn—

“October’s workmanship to rival May,”

they have independent value, but they are not noticed in the Sonnet when we read it through; they fall into place there, and being in their place, are not seen. The great subjects of the two Sonnets, the religious aspect of beautiful but grave Nature—the religious aspect of a city about to awaken and be alive, are the only ideas left in our mind. To Wordsworth has been vouchsafed the last grace of the self-denying artist; you think neither of him nor his style, but you cannot help thinking of—you must recall—the exact phrase, the very sentiment he wished.”

XXXVI. I will ask you to note, my friends, that in the octave of this Sonnet there is not any couplet occasioned by end-stopped lines. It would be going too far to say that the occurrence of a couplet in such a manner is a substantial blemish; but I do think it is foreign to the genius of the Sonnet form Italian, and the absence of it is a virtue which causes a special beauty. For another treatment of the substance of this Sonnet, see VI. For Sonnets of the same general thought, namely, good cheer—echoing Emerson’s remark that you may know a true bard by his firm and cheerful tone—see X, XI, XXXI, XL, LXXVIII. Here I will append, in extension of this thought, a short discourse which hitherto I have not been allowed to print. I wished to make a bit of a book of it for a special pur-



pose, but two friends (L. L. W., CXIV., and Dr. Joseph Henry Allen) forbade. They said it was too personal, and Dr. Allen, a venerable and noble scholar, who exercises my heart unto both love and reverence, said: "If we should find now such a document by George Herbert, how precious we should deem it!" But I wrote not the little tractate as a sum of my experience, but rather as a human ideality treated under narrative and individual form. Any way, it will not seem out of place in these private notes. I call it

### THE GARDEN OF A DAY.

The Bible makes the first dwelling of the first man a garden. This is no little of the beauty of that story of creation. And I find a good grace and cheerful tone in the purpose of man in the garden, as the good Book has it, "The Lord took the man and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it." (Gen. II. 15). The word "dress" is a good one herein, and very cheering, for which we may thank the elder translators. It is a good thought that being put in a garden, the purpose is that we may dress what already is lovely, and make it bloom the more. I find the Hebrew word Englished by "dress" means to work, and is the same word that is in the command, "Six days shalt thou labor," etc.; hence, to work or till the soil of the garden. But I like the rendering "dress;" for it is a phrase both common and happy that we dress the ground, meaning we till it; nay, we even call the spreading of an unsightly fertilizer "a top dressing," as if it were but an outer cloak against the weather and to protect the under robes of green which soon take its place. Therefore to "dress" is a good rendering of "work" or "till," and the better that it carries sense of adorning therewith. Man, being in the garden, was to "dress" it with fruits and flowers and all the beauties that would come of the regard and tillage of it.

Now surely this is a good image of our estate, and very likely not far from the old poet's mind. We live in a garden, which is the earth. And what part of that garden have we but this very day and place we are in? Wherefore the earth is a vast garden and this day and place our corner in it. And if we dress not our corner, and all likewise did naught in their corners, where were the dressing of the garden?

But how dress it?—this is to be looked at. Consider. If we went into a garden to work and could add no perfection, it being all made well, then we could dress it only with ourselves, that is, by using it as a garden and joying in it, and behaving ourselves as in a garden. But this is our case. Every day is a garden-day, and nothing can be added to the shape that the Master Gardener has dressed it withal. It is full of the bloom of a garden; but if we behave as if in no garden but in a desert, then we dress it not in the sole way we have; no, but in truth ravage it, like swine in a bed of flowers.

Often have I thought I would count the delights in the garden of a day, and once I set myself to it. Indeed it were good sport for a grumbler, for it is like racing on foot after an antelope, and the man would pant too hard with the run awhile to find breath for singing "Willow." I gave up the counting soon because there seemed no end to it, like Palissy who set himself to numbering the arts that had need of wood, but after a little made a stop, because he could think not how any art could exist without wood. Yet though I went not far, the few things that I counted were so fine that they are worth the telling. Thus I began: First I counted my waking. And when I put it in a place by itself, to look at it with no other of the garden fruits near it, I was astonished mightily to see what a flower of the garden it is! Now not to be and now to be, now I know not where and now here, now senseless, how I know not, and now, again how I know not, full of senses that lay hold of myself and of everything—what an amazing quick delight is that! What a sea of wonder to be cast in! And how am I buoyed up in it, like in a Huron fable the woman who fell from the sky into the sea when all was a waste of waters, and all the sea-creatures gathered to keep her afloat till land could be made out of earth brought up from the bottom of the sea by some of the great ocean animals. Then when land was made, soon she brought forth twins; and in like manner my awaking is the mother of a double issue, myself and all the creation!

After this count, I came to the light, which was to be counted. Thomas Fuller calls light "God's eldest daughter," and like him Milton, "Offspring of Heaven, first born;" and again Sir Thomas Browne calls it "The shadow of God." But I like none of these very well. The Bible phrase is better, "The light of his countenance." What a pleasure to see light! Which is to say, What a pleasure to see! for light is the visibleness of anything. Shakespeare's elate images are good—"The jocund Day stands tiptoe on the misty mountain top," and "The

Dawn, in russet mantle clad, walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill." The entering of light at the open eye is a glorious flower in the garden.

Next, I must still count from the eye; for, turning my head, I see sleeping shapes near,—my beloved. And what a delight, what a rose of the garden, is this to count. And how can it be numbered aright if only it be counted one; since I must count one for each dear being who is in sight? Here were a chapter in itself, here were a long song of delight; but if I am to count I must mark each charm off quickly; else never shall I reach the end of my beginning. ,

Next, I count a joy for the sense of my ears, for there comes to me a rare music. My children awake in a room near by and begin to sing together. For this is their wont not seldom. They sing song after song, in parts, in unison, as may be;—it makes a wondrous leap of the heart in me. This counts one flower in the garden, but fain would I call it a hundred or a thousand.

For another count I must lay finger on my beginning to think; or, better I may say, thoughts come pouring into me like the light and the voices; and each thought is a quick glow and swift delight, if I but take note of it. Yet I must put these all together as one count, for never I should end counting this one flower, thought, if I must number every petal of it.

Here is a garden indeed. All these flowers and delights in one little spot of my corner of it! For yet I have but waked, not arisen to look around me fairly. But now I get me up and go to the window, where a rare sight I have to count, for it is "a lovely gray day;" no sun, but a tender and soft gray with silver edges. Then I have to count the bath which daily I apply to me—a delight in which my whole body seems resolved into sense. Draw the water at night so that at morning it has the temperature of the room, and have not so much of it as to take the body by too harsh surprise, and yet not too little, which then would chill by too slow dipping,—and there shall be no shock, only a keen deliciousness. And the sense of cleanliness thereafter which makes the mind feel kingly—I must count one for that, like an honor or decoration. And the glow of strength that follows—that is a count. Then do I attire myself,—which means that I put on comfort and wealth—two counts. Here is a garden indeed! I cry again; for as yet I have had but myself. All these delights have come to me while I am alone.

But now come other persons to me, and I have to count the family greetings in the morning; and every one is a count, for each is dif-

ferent and has a charm of its own like to no other. Then, the breakfast! And now I would be glad to know who can count me the counts. For I have a keen call for food in me which makes every mouthful a wondrous satisfaction. But first I have a wish for a cool water drink; and what sensation is like that which travels over me with that cool draught! And now where a void is, mere filling is a delight. It would spread a soft ease over me to have the stomach merely shoveled its fill. But the eating, the crispness, the softness, the melting, the flavors—I will count every one of them; yea, and the warm drink, that salutes first the intellectual nostril. Here is a garden indeed, with flowers in banks, I cry again; for with all these delights I have but come down stairs, and not gone out.

Therewith I go out doors, and now begin new and amazing counts. I must count first the farewell at the door. This, indeed, if the woman will, may be as unnumerable as a surface, for though you may count it one, it may have no edge nor ending but spread over the whole garden of the day. Now am I in the ocean of air, and I take a deep breath—that's a count. And it fans my cheeks—I must count both of them; and cools my throat which I like to unwrap and bare to it; I count that. The sun has broken forth; and here should I stand and count forever if I should number the things that the sun begirts me withal, or tell by numeration the majesty of it. I can but count one and go on numbering. For there are the heavens, which I would fain number by all the points of the compass, such delights they shower on my eyes; and birds fly under them like bits of shadows, and each should count two, one for his shape to my eye and one for his song to my ear. Amid all these wondrous delights I go to my work.

And what shall I count my work? What can I but a thousand or ten thousand, one for every moment of it. How speak well enough of the happiness, the dignity, the usefulness, which work is? It is health and precious bodily good. It is force and precious mental good. Pleasures grow bright and glad by it, being fairly earned. Nay, work itself grows pleasure; even if it be but digging or any irksome thing whatever, I say it shall grow to pleasure, being joyful to look back on. He who works moreover, has somewhat wholly his own, deeds belonging altogether to himself. Carlyle calls work the "Modern Majesty." Who knows where labor speeds? It goes as a word flies, anywhere, everywhere. A Chinese emperor had a good saying—That if any man worked not, or if any woman was idle, some one thereupon must suffer cold or hunger in the empire. Our work may be a struggle to a grand

deed. But what if it be labor in a small way, obscure, unheeded, in corners? The truth is the same. For duty, how common soever, may be done in a grand way. "Of every noble work the silent part is best." Little troubles pass by a worker, because he is in high company with his work. If we are set on by temptations and whirling desires, lay hold of work, and to it! And if we have divine sorrows, unthanked labor, loneliness, walking aside, reaching out where once was a form to find but air, lay hold of work, and to it! For this converts sorrow into knowledge. Indeed I know not how to count this flower of work in the day's garden, but go on from it, for I am numbering.

Then comes the noon, high noon, "yellow, glorious, golden"—another count. With that comes rest; and this again I might number by minutes, one for each minute—so sweet a flower is rest after work. Then the dining, I count it one; and renewed appetite, another one; and every flavor and grace of food and drink, each one I count one again as at the morning meal. Then work begins again—another count. And now, mayhap, as the day grows, our work may grow to a shape—we may see a result formed. This is great delight—a hearty count.

"Now comes the gentle evening on." Coolness drops from the heaven down, and from the earth arises; they mingle in dew. Clouds shine in the west. The sun has sunk beneath them; his beams stream up into them, crimson, purple, gold. Soon he is gone, and dusk comes,—a tender, gathering dusk—light's silence. Every one of these colors, every bright ray in the cloud, every spot of gray dusk, I must count one, so sweetly apply these flowers to the eye and of so lovely colors they are. Now as the silence of wisdom rebukes clamors, so in the shade the clamors of the market die. Soon it is dark. Then comes the lighting of the highway lamps. They stud the street with stars, and every window is moon-like, and the earth is a firmament of constellations. I will count every lamp that the eye falls on, for there is none but I welcome it, none but flashes a little pleasure into me. Now I turn my feet homeward. I must bethink me how fine it is to walk fast—every strong step of health is a bloom in the garden. Where I discern my home-lamps, I must count every moony window, for not one of them but has its meaning, and I know what is behind the curtain, and it makes my heart leap. Then quicken my steps, faster and faster; I must count the speed—it is a bloom. Behold against the window faces prest—every one of them to be counted by every feature in them. A rush of feet at the door, old and young arms outstretched, a clamorous bevy with a welcome, and lovings, and claimings and call-

ings—count these who can. I have forgotten my reckoning. 'Tis in the myriads!

In the garden of the day I am now at that corner which is the evening. First in the flowers of this plot of the garden I must count the tea-table. The wash is had—I must count that, for the laving of water is delicious to hands and face, and why overlook a fine sensation? The dust of the work-place is done away. It is a refreshed body that comes to more refreshment at the table. Thereupon here again is a good lusty welcome for the food, and a right keen gusto of it—which I count for the third time in my garden of a day; and if it were the tenth time, I would count it as readily, for it is a fine thing. Yea, and every flavor, every sweet taste, every spice, and a wholesome staple like bread, and daintiness of creams and fruits, I will count, and I take each one with a thought that by no means I would miss it, and I am all but ready to count each one again because I miss it not, but have it. At the evening meal I have all these things with a rich ease and leisure. For I have come to that place in the garden where a seat is made for dear loitering. At the morning meal all the work is ahead; it is a fresh time but an eager, the heart beats a roll-call to the ranks. At mid-day also I am at mid-work. But now at the evening meal, all is soft and gentle, unurged, unhastened. Truly I must count that, for 'tis a fine pleasure. And I know not but this ease makes a compound with every taste and flavor at the table—for what fine tincture of sense can be had fairly if it stay not on the tongue a little? Therefore I must count the leisure and flavors twice, once for themselves and once in the compound of them. Now this deliciousness of flavors and ease is had under a lamp—which is to be counted. For the lamp, on the table, or hanging above, gives the faces a necromantic bloom, a ruby and topaz tinting, with long and streaming shadows. Yea, I have looked about often and carried my eyes from face to face to see their beauty. For there is one beauty in a face by sunlight and another by star light, and another under the lamp, and one beauty differs from another beauty in glory. I must count every one of the faces if any one, as I look from one to another—so many blooms, so many pleasures unto me. Each one drops into me a single and a different delight.

Then comes conversation, which hovers around ease and a lamp like a night-flying moth, winged, downy, fringed, superb. But this I must count more than one, for 'tis a very array of pleasures; if I count aright, I must number every good thought in the body of the subject, and

every spangle of wit on the garment of it. And truly I would count very happily the talk of the young persons, for it is wondrously entertaining to me the while I listen without checking it, and smile within when I may not smile without. Often it raises tender thoughts in me and I am nigh to tears while they laugh. When the talk is wise as well as youthful, as often it is, then it is a very lovely wisdom; for there is an agedness that sits as fairly on the lip of youth as youthfulness sits on the brow of age. 'Tis a pleasure to be counted also when I can set going the talk as I will, and lead it; and 'tis my own lack if I cannot do this, for Plato says well, and it is wondrous true of the young, that "all men, well questioned, answer well."

After the tea-table, I must count the lamp-table; and on it every book counts one, and every print or picture; and the game also, unless I must count it as many times as it has players. This indeed I will do of the reading aloud—I mean it must be counted once for every hearer; for each of them has a look, a manner, an attention, an answer of his own, and the shower of my pleasures is the number of these drops, which break the lamplight into bows of colors. I must count the school lessons of the children; for I find it a good tap of pleasure on my head to betake me to Virgil again with my boy, and to such like green arbors of my youth. Then comes the "good-night" of each; and every sweet act, gentle look and blessing counts one. And 'tis well to pause on each long enough to count it fairly; for they seem wonderful blisses if we hold them but still a little, but they go swiftly past.

Then by my fire I sit (and good sooth, I must count my open fire one) and fall to a dream, to a hope, to a forelook mayhap, but most to a backward look; and this will have some joy; for who does altogether ill? and some reproach, for who does altogether well? and some pain, for who has not lost somewhat or has not holy, sorrowful secrets? But I am very sure that if, the day through, we have counted the blissful things, we shall find the back-look joyful; nay, it is then, as Richter says, "the only Paradise out of which we cannot be driven."

Now come the late hours of night. Yet all the day is present, nothing is dead. With all the day about me, yea, wrapped in it, I stretch me on my bed—a wondrous bliss. What a marvel, the sense of uncompounded rest! More blissful than wonderful, and again the wonder greater than the bliss; for so do sleepy peace and wakeful emotions strive awhile within me, when I lie down and feel the first full, blissful stretch of rest. Then thoughts come awhile; and indeed thoughts!

Yea, never the day with all its light can breed them—knowledge, understanding, sight, divination! A poet says the dead of night is the noon of thought. And again, "Wisdom mounts her zenith with the stars." Another asks, "Why the night wakes in us warmer love? Is it because we feel in us the press of helplessness? Or are we lifted, being withdrawn from clamor—withdrawn to shades where naught is left for soul but soul?" Then on our beds come solemn thoughts, which have their bliss. For what rill of joy is there that runs not into a solemn sea? Then begin we to fall asleep, and this is bliss. First rises the sense of safety. Then that sense sinks in its own peace and fades with all other thoughts—begins again to glow—fades again, and more; and so sleep comes. Blissful was its coming on; more blissful its deepening; most joyful the sense of safety from which I sink away. And blest am I if the last bliss and flower of the garden-day which I count be this, that I have had the grateful spirit to count all the others.

XXXIX. Observe phrasing—the first and last lines of the octave similar, the second and seventh also balancing and unpaused, the lines between these balances variedly phrased, the fifth and sixth lines contrasting with the uniformity of the third and fourth. The long billows of the lines of the sestet mark and intone the change and progress of thought and the sacred imagery.

XL. The long roll and extended phrasing of the first quatrain. The short enumerative phrasings, variedly ordered, of the second quatrain. The long, steady line-roll of the sestet marking both the return to the opening theme and the contrast of the peace and light of the reflections with the broken and jostling expression of the unhappy things. The same effect—constancy and peace—attends the identical rhymes.

XLII. On this Sonnet I have received the following:

"The first four lines make a vigorous picture, full of force and expression of great power. This is equal to 'If on the pinions



of terrific wind,' etc. It is a splendid simile where fit similies for the power of the sea are scarce. 'The plane on which they prance' is equally good and admirably sustains the foregoing. The vigor is maintained and the wild storminess of the surroundings suitably color the succeeding lines.

"I am not sure of the last two lines; they do not seem to sum up. Above you contrast the steadiness of your love with the heaving waters and revert to it again in closing, I presume. There is a charm of word and movement in this Sonnet that makes me quite indifferent as to whether you have said exactly what you should or not, as the music of a song often tells the thought without the words."

XLVI. Here are two differing views:

"I am not taken with this and do not regard it as like you in thought or execution." On the other hand:

"I think our friend is mistaken when he says 'this is not like you.' There is not a Sonnet in the whole collection more like you. Albeit the subject is not pleasing, I like it."

LIV. The eighth line is measured thus:

♩ | ♩ ♪ | ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ||

LX. What to say of this Sonnet I am not sure. 'Tis purely lucid, and the thought is true and worthy. The harmonies are very remarkable; for rhymes of two syllables are difficult enough and rare enough in the Sonnet in English, but three syllables, as in the octave here, almost are beyond attaining by the genius of our language, and hardly to be met at all. I cannot recall that ever I have met a Sonnet therewith, besides this one. With this I will only add two agreeing dissents from friends. One writes:

"This seemed to me on first reading obscure in meaning and labored in form. After several careful readings its meaning grows clear, but there is nothing left in my mind after the last line is read but a certain feeling of cleverness."

Another says: "I need make no comment upon this. The thought is noble, but too deeply buried in the elaborate work of the frame. I admire the ingenious work, while I do not approve it as a Sonnet."

LXI. One of my favorites, dear friends, as to form. In connection with the thought and in relation thereto I enjoy much the value of effect, as it seems to me, of the identical rhymes in the octave. But these are far exceeded by the peculiar beauty and force, in just this place and for just this thought, of the identical rhymes in the sestet. To me the effect of them is singularly strong, lovely and dignified; nor can I conceive any manner in which the canon against couplets in the Sonnet can be broken with more valid and beautiful exception than is done herein. To this, however, I will add remarks from two of you, which differ from me:

"I am sorry you have put such a beautiful thought in a coat cut out of fashion. There is also a distinct loss of effect by repeating in the sestet. The development of this is almost or quite Shakespearian. If arrayed in the simple words of some of the others it would be one of the best."

"The thought in this Sonnet is very beautiful; but I should not care for the Sonnet at all were it not for the last three lines."

LXV. A friend says:

"This is very beautiful and has gems of holy thought. The tenth line is an instance." Indeed I thank my kind friend for that. I love the voices of the creatures and they touch me deeply.

LXVI, LXVII, LXVIII. To these New Year Sonnets for my people I will add here some New Year songs written for them:

## NEW YEAR SONG.

The days that come,  
 The days that go,  
 Fill up the season's flow  
 And make what these do speak, in  
     what are dumb.

Wherefore so live  
 That days that fly  
 Lift voices to the sky  
 To brim with praise the season  
     fugitive.

To Duty say,  
 "Thou shalt be strong":  
 To Love, "I will belong  
 In duty and love to my beloved  
     always."

## HARMONY.

Old Year, farewell!—But ere thou leave,  
 Chime me a sweet memorial,  
 A lovely lay; that I receive  
 Comfort melodious, musical,  
 Of memories made, that softly shall  
 About me fall and to me cleave.

New Year, come in! 'Tis soon anon  
 Ye sit ye down with me to stay;  
 But ere ye sit, sing out, sing on,  
 A new and canty roundelay  
 Of tones of hope, that spring to-day  
 My heart and mind to ring upon.

Eke both obeyed, New Year and Old;  
 To hopes the New gave song complete,  
 The other all his memories told:  
 When lo! in harmony they meet,  
 And make a duo-music sweet  
 Of One Love that did both enfold.

## HYMN.

Now the New Year  
Holy and hale is here!

But the old Year—  
It will not disappear!

The new's begun,  
And yet the old's not done.

Ever doth stay  
What once hath filled a Day.

And what doth part  
That once hath filled a Heart?

The Past doth lie  
Ambered in Memory;

So, to Gems drest,  
To lie upon the Breast.

How rich is He,  
God's great Divinity,

Who brings the New,  
Yet the Old leaveth, too!

## THE NEW YEAR.

New Year, come in! come in!  
Go out, Old Year! Old Year!  
And with thee disappear  
Thine every biting fear!  
But all thy joy remain,  
And all thy hope sustain  
The New Year! O, New Year,  
Come in, come in, come in!

O, dear New Year, of thee  
Kind benefactions three  
I pray be done to me!

First, I ask to Have:  
 To go not faint nor bare,  
 But get in hand and have  
 What I must eat and wear.  
 Eke to possess in mind,  
 When I with thought have striven,  
 Lest, body fed, I find  
 Mind famished. But most in heart  
 To have the precious part,  
 Which is, dear love me given.

Next, I entreat to Know:  
 Of what I have, to know  
 From Whom it cometh so—  
 Light, and the body's good,  
 Food, water and wood;  
 Joys of mind, that be  
 More featly, reason's eye  
 To see precious beauty;  
 Of being loved the joy  
 To natural girl and boy,  
 Full reverently, full nearly,  
 All faithfully, full dearly;—  
 These joys gathered and stored  
 In one thought, Him, the Lord,  
 By whom around me poured.

Last—most I ask to Give:  
 More than to have or know,  
 I pray I may bestow  
 The meat doth make me live,  
 Feeding body and soul  
 In kind. What plenties roll  
 To hand, shelter of cot  
 Or hall, and raiment got  
 Me round, sweet saps that spill  
 From clouds, then grains that fill  
 And crowd,—of these to give  
 In measure as them I have  
 I pray; or else not live,—

My soul shut up and barred,  
 Mind mean, hand tight, heart hard  
 With things that have been given  
 In floods from out the heaven  
 Of God.

Eke what I know,  
 O, let me give it so,  
 And of my mind outpour  
 A store. Thoughts that rise  
 In aethers of the skies,  
 And thence not down will drift  
 To be with us, but lift  
 Us up on pinions swift  
 To them—Beauty that fills  
 Valleys with running rills,  
 That edges nooks of brooks  
 With dew and flowers, that looks  
 From every sea-shell's eye  
 Of pink, that to the dry  
 Meadow discourseth rain,  
 That lifteth up the plain  
 To be a hill, and where  
 Sea-vapors wed with air  
 Veils stars: and thoughts that draw  
 The spirit forth in awe,—  
 Meshes of infinite lights  
 In infinite heavens—the nights  
 More terrible and grand  
 Than day; wonders of land  
 Peopled with living things,  
 Wonders of mystical wings  
 Shuttling the air; the deep  
 Of seas on fires that sleep  
 Beneath: and thoughts of zest  
 Of heart and pleasures blest,—  
 Ecstatic sports and wiles  
 Of tyrannous babes, and smiles  
 Of patient age serene  
 And still, and faith between

Dear lovers with their child,  
 And sweet emotions mild  
 Of maiden dreams, and bold  
 Youth's leap that lays a hold  
 On fame: and thoughts of Good  
 Ruling where evil stood,  
 That maketh lies to wane  
 And surely die, and pain  
 To beckon joy her way  
 And flee; that through a day  
 Of travail sore and long,  
 Through murky night of strong  
 Wrong and anguish, hath led  
 The nations on and spread  
 Pure peace:—These thoughts I pray,  
 Having, to give, and say  
 They all in deeps are stored  
 Of one thought, Him, the Lord,  
 From whom down on me poured.

But more than thoughts or things,  
 To give love's precious part!  
 To lift some weary heart  
 By love with fire and wings!  
 To love a child till sings  
 Its soul with artless art!  
 All souls to love till start  
 With love their mystical springs!  
 Loving the more where more  
 'Tis need to the lorn and lone;  
 Rhyming a tender tone  
 With deeds till joys run o'er;  
 Bearing the Lord's dear own  
 In love, as me He bore!

New Year, come in! come in!  
 Go out, Old Year! Old Year!  
 And with thee disappear  
 Thine every biting fear!  
 Leave not a murmur here,

Nor misadventure drear;  
 But all thy joy remain,  
 And all thy hope sustain  
 The New Year! O, New Year,  
     Come in!  
     For beauty, for duty,  
     Come in!  
 With never a fear, with serious cheer,  
 Come in, come in, come in!

## HYMN.

Shall the New Year bring Joy,  
     Shall it bring Fear,  
 Shall it bring Weal or Woe—  
     'Tis sure 'tis here.  
 But this is not more sure,  
     Than that the vast  
 To-come is filled with Him  
     Who filled the Past.  
 Father, we pray to Thee!  
     And in our Heart  
 Say not "Thou wast," "Wilt be,"—  
     Only "Thou art."

## JOYFUL.

Old Year, a sadness springs  
     At parting from thee:  
 Of all the songs heart sings,  
     The contrite become me.  
 Sad thought! the past is run:  
     Howe'er I range it  
 With penitent soul, 'tis done;—  
     I can not change it.  
 But ah! time's loving roll!  
     Whate'er I make it  
 The new may be; up, Soul!  
     Faithfully take it.



New Year, a gladness springs  
 In spirit from thee;  
 Of all the songs heart sings,  
 The joyful become me.

Also I will add here three little "Pastorals" to my people, at New Year days:

A Happy New Year! Men are saying this to each other continually at this season. 'Tis a good greeting, a kind wish, and hath a benevolent sincerity in it. But suppose we were saying to one another: Make a Happy New Year! Were not this a better greeting? Would it not search the soul belike? Could we say "Make a Happy New Year" many times, and hear it said unto us, without being cleft by it to our hearts and made to think much and consider our ways? Belike then we might consider more how truly we do make and build our happiness for ourselves. Nay, I know we are not mighty to do everything; yes, and that very much we are at each other's mercy, so that anyone may stab another with a sharp blade of unhappiness, because always we are near enough to one another for such a thrust, and there is no armor proof against it. Yet still it is amazing and heavenly how much we have the making of happiness for ourselves, how independent of chances we may be, how able to perform for ourselves and to keep a happy estate. No one hath studied this but he hath perceived it and grown large in it. And one thing is very sure, that as so very much we have power to make happiness for others, this is the same as having the power for ourselves. For it is certain that no one can be altogether unhappy while he is making another being happy.

"With all thy getting, get understanding"—a good thought for the beginning of a New Year. Think—what if we should eat without understanding? What would become of us if we had no knowledge of edibles, whether they would be good for us or bad, nourishing or worthless, or even noisome; and we should eat anything we found, without understanding? Truly very soon the body no longer would be a chariot for the spirit, but a wheezing, rattling vehicle, unsightly and unsteady, hardly pushed about, and soon a wreck. But because we can not see with our eyes the state of our soul as we can see the body's totterings or deformities, we conceive not so readily that to feed the

mind without understanding hath just as ugly and decrepit result as so to feed the body. For some things nourish the mind and give it true strength, which is power to see truly what things are around us, and to judge well; and some things have no food-stuff in them, but are chaff and husk; and some things are poisons. Sad and pitiful and of small dignity is it to have no understanding in these matters, but to mistake the bran for the kernel, the chaff for the grain, the noisome for the wholesome, and thereupon either starve or sicken the mind. Sad and dull is it to famish ourselves with husks and not know it, while we grow weaker and poorer in all true and fine insight, more basely ignorant, more infamously obstinate and dogmatical, and the mind moves with a great creaking and noise, and yet does nothing. Therefore, with all our getting, get we understanding of what things are really beautiful, ideal, noble, grandly useful and rich to supply the soul.

The New Year! How may it be new? In what way and blissfully new? First, it may be new in doing over again, as we must in the blessedness of living, the things that are old, very old, as old as Life, or Time, or Eternity—the simplicity of duty, the things that we ought, the glories of thinking, the sanctities of worship, the virtue of loving, the tender fruits of helpfulness. These are the things as great and firm as the “everlasting hills.” We can have a New Year new with no other things than these that also are the old, the everlasting. Secondly, the Year may be new in fulfilling these old and heavenly things a little better than ever before; duty, a little more faithfully; thought, worship, reverence, awe, more deeply and purely; love, more tenderly and unselfishly; “the helping hand,” more constantly and with a dearer fellowship.

Truly, how great the New Year may be! to do in it the everlasting things again and again, yet a little more nobly and blissfully than ever before.

LXX. This Sonnet was sung in the morning when just I had arisen. The new day and the white draperies around me suddenly became an image, a portrait, a presence to the mind’s eye; and the mind’s ear partook, discerning a singing in the “inward silences.” The Sonnet has three parts: in the first

part I say there arises an inward music, hid and not to be made known; in the second, I say that the privacy of the music, so that it must be hid and cannot be uttered, is itself an increase of the music; in the third, I say that my wish to sing it forth if it were possible, adds still another measure of music.

LXXI, LXXII, LXXIII. "Grappled to my soul with hooks of steel;" which are senses, whereunto she is beautiful and delightful; memories, wherein she is sacred; thoughts, wherein she is comrade, fellow-working.

LXXVII. You will hear the harmonies in the first and third accents in each line. Compare note on XIV.

LXXXII. It was on a very radiant summer Sunday morning that this sonnet was given to me. The sky was of that deep, luminous blue which is so glorious in the heavens. No mist or vapor obscured or veiled the color, these exhalations being all gathered into masses of shining-white cloud, ample, yet not enough to qualify, but only to contrast, the blue. I was strolling slowly, being bound for a friend's home, and therefore happy, and thence to a mail-station where I knew a letter from another friend was awaiting me, and therefore happy again. Then appeared the little child clad all in bright crimson. Being glad, and ready for any bright seizure, the color and the little wearer thereof made room for themselves in eye and heart against the over-blue of the sky. This Sonnet is in four parts. The first part, in four and a half lines, mentions, with some contrast, the blue sky, the red gown, the child. The second, in three lines, contrasts the red against the blue, and the child against the whole of Nature. In the third, the first tercet, the unfathomableness of the blue space and the child-soul are brought together. The fourth part, in the second tercet, comes into awe

before the picture and the presence of Love. The first quatrain encroaches on and seizes a small portion of the second; but this is no ill liberty if the thought and manner of the shortened second quatrain be firm and worthy enough to balance the increased length of the opening; of which you, kind friend, will judge. But I would not end the encroachment with end of the fifth, because I think the harmonies should avoid a stopping couplet anywhere. The twelfth line is measured thus:

♩ ♪ | ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♩ ♪ | ♩ ||

The last line thus:

♪ ♪ | ♩ · | ♩ · | ♩ ♪ | ♩ ♪ | ♩ ||

LXXXV. My friend says: "I do not like this Sonnet in substance or result. The work is well done and pleasing to the ear, but not worthy your pen. The second line easily becomes a sneer, which the dignity of your other poems forbids. No, this is not worthy of you at all." Mayhap my friend is right and the Sonnet worthy neither of me nor of any one. Yet I must disclaim any intent to sneer. That line is meant to be a plain aversion to prettiness in verse and to the notion that the poet, with his eye "in a fine phrensy rolling," must await some agitating emotion, instead of seeking wild flowers like a botanist.

XC. About this Sonnet I have received the following affectionate judgment: "Perfectly delightful. How natural and simple. Here is one of your best. You will never excel this in exquisite expression. Charming it is, indeed. The plain form of Sonnet is best, and you have here been more than fortunate in selection. The music is a fit accompaniment to so sweet a song. If I put a hand to it at all I should change 'unsedulous.' It is not in keeping with the balance, and mars the line. It is

not poetical. Substitute two simple words and this is a flawless gem."

In the eleventh line I first wrote "unsedulous" where "re-signed" now stands.

XCII, XCIII. RACHEL FRAZIER, RUTH DEERING, my twin girls. See also Cameo XXIX. What can I say fittingly of these, my fond playmates, now becoming more than playmates—my cheerers, comrades, friends, advisers—yet playmates still! For with them I am "a boy again just for to-night"—unless indeed they say that my whimsies and pranks shun day no more than evening. They are such rainy girls—for they belong out-doors, and they draw others and me in-doors and patter their domestic fancies on the floors while the rain makes music on the roofs. They swim, skate, play ball, ride wheels, ride horses, take long walks, row boats, and have no fear of stormy waters—and if there be aught else to do out-doors I am sure they do it, though I can think of naught more at this moment. They sing, and make music with instrument, and dance, and are good actors in good plays, and spread feasts—and if there be aught more to be done merrily in-doors which I recall not at this thinking I am sure they do it. Cabot says—by my memory, not having the place by me—he thinks no one ever saw Emerson run. 'Tis a question whether the adorable sage would not or could not. Methinks, as I remember that long, quaint form of short curves and corners, the appearance of him running, or in attempt thereof, were fantastical, not to say of that manner of surprise which is comedy. But I must run and skip and prance and otherwise disport me by reason of my girls; and methinks if the Concord Seer once unwarily had admitted them to live under roof with him, 'tis most certain that either they would have limbered him or he would have trammelled them, or both would have "been better strangers." For myself I can sit in corner a

long time—not “unregarded age in corners thrown,” for my two are most sweet friends of me—observing with a still delight their sports; but on occasion I lack no suppleness of heart nor of obedient limb to entertain a frolic. I bethink me at this moment of a late hour one party-evening when an old fashioned reel was proposed, and one of my two, with a young visitor so much and so affectionately at my house that often I call her my third (Cameo XXIII), made a race to me for partner. Ha! Equal that honor if you can, ye philosophers who never run. Verily, I am ready to count it the better dignity and no little decoration, and am willing to be so much of a Malvolio as not to be “born great” nor to “achieve greatness” if I can have that manner of “greatness thrust upon” me.

Here I will add some other songs of mine to my twain:

#### TO MY RACHEL.

I hail thy sacred natal day,  
 My dear and good and loving Rae.  
 The sky is fair, the wind at rest,  
 The earth in summer robes is drest,  
 And e'en the light seems still more blest  
 Since it my Rachel's brow hath pressed;  
 And more than light, my daughter's face  
 Illumines all my heart apace.  
 Be blest to you another year,  
 My gentle one, my sweet and dear!  
 And O, as fast the hours roll by,  
 I pray with all my heart that I  
 To you as richly good may be  
 As every hour you are to me.  
 But what is this? Not one alone,  
 But two, a birth-day song must own?  
 Ah! Lovely two! Ah, precious twain!  
 Almost ye fill my heart with pain,  
 So filled with thankful love 'tis prest,  
 Ye are such joy, ye are such rest!

June 8, 1893.

## TO MY RUTH.

I hail thy natal day, my Ruth;  
 And as the years with dew of youth  
 Do bathe you, all their drops above  
 My heart exceeds with dew of love.  
 May skies extend their softest hue  
 Above your head, my dearie Rue!  
 The day to welcome you is bright,  
 And earth is happy if the sight  
 Of your dear eyes upon it turn;  
 But all the sun gives not such light  
 To me, nor doth around me burn  
 So blessedly as heart doth see  
 My daughter shine. O may I be  
 As good to you as you to me!  
 But what is this? Not one alone,  
 But two, a birth-day song must own?  
 Ah! lovely two! Ah, precious twain!  
 Almost ye fill my heart with pain,  
 So full with thankful love 'tis prest,  
 Ye are such joy, ye are such rest.

June 8, 1893.

## THE DOUBLE STAR.

A beam came in the window of my heart  
     With morning light;  
 A beam came in the window of my room,  
     In mid of night.  
 "A map, a map of the heavens," I said,  
 "Bring me a map of the skies o'erhead,  
 That I may know what light hath sped  
     Hither in flight."  
 Soon I beheld this night-light from the sky  
     Was a double star;  
 Two at its place, but one unto my sight  
     From earth afar.

"Ah, ha!" quoth I, with merry mind,  
 "At my heart's window shall I find  
 'Tis a like star of double kind  
                     Leaps the day's bar?"

Ay, blissfully so; joyful forthwith I see  
                     Two beams in one  
 They were that passed the window of my heart  
                     With early sun:  
 My twin girls sweet, my double light,  
 One beam of love, but two-fold bright,  
 Ye enter my heart and fill my sight  
                     When day's begun.

Of the song that follows may I say that if you will read it  
 aright you must recite the refrain thus:

  
 Ah!    ha!                      middle    aged!

## TWO.

I have been young and now am old,  
 Or if not old, yet middle-aged;  
                     Ah! ha! middle-aged!  
 Yet never played I with the girls  
 With such fantastic quips and querls,  
                     Such quiddities as bid it is  
 With the sweet creatures to make bold,  
 Although, once young, I now am old;  
                     Ah! ha! now am old!

Conceive not that I play with all;  
 I tell ye I am no such fool—  
                     Ah! ha! no such fool!  
 No, no, I pick and choose, par-fay,  
 With whom my merry tricks to play,  
                     My blandishments, outlandishments,  
 And such fine antics as befall;  
 But with my sweet select, not all—  
                     Ah! ha! no, not all.



I wage my fun with two, sweet two:  
The man's a dolt who has but one—

Ah! ha! has but one!

Alternate now I spar and prance,  
With playmates wild I square and dance,  
Fantastical, gymnastical,

Till you would think the deil's to do  
Betwixt me and my romping two—

Ah! ha! gamesome two!

The one is tall; so is the other;  
And both are bright and very merry—

Ah! ha! very merry!

Like summer brooks all day they tattle,  
Not wisdom, yet a winsome prattle;  
And smilingly, beguilingly,  
The maids my crazy noddle bother,  
And one as much as eke the other—

Ah! ha! eke the other.

I steal behind and steal a kiss;  
They cry, "A plague!" but 'tis no matter—

Ah! ha! 'tis no matter!

If some one spy, I do not blink,  
For "*Honi soit qui mal y think*,"

While filially, familiarly

They deign me that etherial bliss,  
A girl's serene and dainty kiss—

Ah! ha! kindly kiss!

These maids make havoc of my pocket;  
The shifty elves know where I'm soft—

Ah! ha! where I'm soft—

In heart than pocket even weaker:  
And so each cunning one is seeker,

Right shiftily, and thriftily,

For my small trash. Howe'er I lock it,  
They well know how to sound my pocket—

Ah! ha! sound my pocket!

One sitteth by me at the table,  
And duly do I entertain her—

Ah! ha! entertain her—

With such a fond and witty banter,  
 As doth, I know, sweet maid! enchant her;  
     But viciously, maliciously,  
 She says nor wit nor fact nor fable  
 Have I, and flouts me at the table—  
                                     Ah! ha! at the table!

The other sitteth on the stool—  
 Nay, both do that—of the piano—  
                                     Ah! ha! the piano!  
 And when they fain would play, I seize 'em  
 By both the hands, and much displease 'em.  
     Pah! 'twere silly if willy nilly  
 To tinkling strings I yielded rule.  
 I want the lassies off the stool—  
                                     Ah! ha! off the stool!

And yet, my dears, my dear twin dears,  
 I must admit your tones are sweet—  
                                     Ah me! passing sweet!  
 And when I hear, at early night,  
 Your touch of strings, your voices bright,  
     Capricious so, delicious so,  
 Go griefs and fears, come tender tears,  
 The while I hark your music, dears—  
                                     Ah me! dearest dears!

And so my days flow on with peace,  
 With heart of peace and sportive pleasure—  
                                     Ah me! tender pleasure:  
 My winsome two, my frolic two,  
 O what without ye might I do?  
     That morrow-full were sorrowful!  
 Please God, my song I shall not cease,  
 For you who fill my days with peace—  
                                     Ah me! heart of peace!

XCIV. SIDNEY H. MORSE—one of the noblest, simplest, sincerest, and withal most gifted souls that ever my love hath been granted to single and possess—a man of a pure and delicate

genius on whose sun-disk of purpose or hope there hath not been one spot of vulgar ambition. Courage marks him. He is a great lover and comrade of young people, and especially I never saw a boy of any degree or nature or age who could withstand his peculiar fascination. They all troop to him, the educated, the ignorant, the high, the low, the unhappy, the fortunate, the poor, the rich—all alike. As a portrait sculptor, his faces and poses are grand and living, partaking equally of his subject and of himself. I knew him young first; now he is old, and a very picture of manly physical beauty, with his strong form, his long gray hair sweeping over his nobly arched head to his shoulders, his slow, half-observant, half-meditative gait, his picturesque slouched hat. We write little, but "the understanding is sweet."

XCV, XCVI, XCVII. HORACE H. BADGER. My love forbids, and yet justice urges, that I should write much, lest I say not enough for truth and yet too much for the right reverence of privacy and reserve. I know no man more ideal to me. His frame, look, carriage, are dignity, power, peace, sweetness. An artist soul, brimming with music, poetry, color and form—wherein his hand hath skill like to his mind's love. A lovely home, filled with affection and restfulness. Sonnets XCVI and XCVII came of some sudden sights of the gentle light of his countenance when I knew he was carrying very heavy burdens.

XCVIII. LOWELL BLAKE MASON, the youngest child of Senator William E. Mason—a boy of princely form and beauty. My friends for many heart-filling years his parents have been. The Senator has made his home radiant with domestic soft light and beauty, despite all the exacting cares of public life; and I know no sweeter, gentler intelligence among women than my namesake's mother.

XCIX. J. FRANKLIN HUGHES. My true and always fellow-working friend. I can not speak truly of what I have done in the pulpit, but only of what we have done, such eloquence and religion hath he discoursed from our grand organ (Sonnets C, CI) before it was burned. Often we wrought together in a sermon, his music making a part of it; for often I made place for organ and song to illustrate or enforce what I was saying, and then continued my discourse. O friend, fine musician, delicate composer, where or how now can be those musical fellow-discoursings, those readings with thy true music composed to enrich and enhance the text and my rendering thereof—whence any more the “Water Babies” gloriously colored with thy master-music both of organ and vocal? Where be these things now? Those days are gone, and return not. Even the grand organ hath ceased to be—the young voices are scattered. But there is a chamber of memory and experiences in me which your music fills evermore.

As I have said, my friend discoursed music for part of many a sermon; and I scrupled not to hand him bits of manuscript even on a Sunday morning when he arrived at church, knowing that he would supply the music richly at the moment, where I had marked the places for it. As an example I will give here what I put into his hand thus suddenly one Harvest Sunday, with designated places for music, arranged so as to have the organ parts make portions of the true rhythms of the whole:

Noah came forth upon the mountain  
 Where the ark had landed,  
 Even on the height of Ararat  
 Where the cumbrous vessel stranded,  
 And on the bare peak sat.  
 Below, as if from hilly fountain,  
 Through valleys yet the waters poured,  
 In deep gulfs roared;

And rushed in swirls, and glided  
 Down slopes to meet the seas  
 That rose as the rainy flood subsided.  
 Prostrate on his knees,  
 The patriarch on the waters gazed,  
 Awed and amazed.

Then gathered his saved around  
 On the small space of ground  
 That was emerged; and Noah prayed.  
 While still the watery skies,  
 Full yet of murky dyes,  
 Shook overhead.

And he petition made  
 To God, and thus he said,  
 While a strange music spread  
 Among the clouds, spread wide, and fell,  
 And caught his words up on its swell:

O Lord, O Mighty Lord,  
 Thou hast fulfilled thy word!  
 Thou didst command; the floods came down;  
 Thou hast beheld the earth and every creature drown,  
 Beneath thy wrath of waters. Frown  
 No longer, Lord; a sign  
 I pray that Love divine  
 No more will overwhelm his creatures.

And the Lord spake and said,  
 "I grant the sign, I bend it o'er thy head.  
 Noah, look upward! Lo!  
 In heaven I set my bow."  
 And with the mandate sang  
 The angels, and outsprang  
 The prismatic bend  
 Over the sky from end to end,  
 And the sudden sun flashed  
 Through the last drops of rain,

And on the dun clouds splashed  
 A splendid various stain  
 Of colors. But Noah prayed,  
 Entreaty made  
 Again, and said—  
 "O Lord, O Mighty Lord,  
 Thou hast fulfilled thy word;  
 Thou didst command, the floods effaced  
 All living things, the earth is stripped and all is waste.  
 Whence, Lord, shall food be gathered? Haste  
 Thy goodness, Lord; a sign  
 I pray; show Love divine  
 Will feed his creatures."

And the Lord answering said,  
 "I grant thy prayer; my bow to bits I shred;  
 Noah, look downward! Lo!  
 O'er earth I crumb the bow!"  
 And with the action sang  
 Seraphs, and on earth sprang  
 Bright shoots and the sown pieces swarmed  
 Through the soil razed by rain;  
 And when the fruits were formed,  
 Each had a rainbow stain  
 Of colors. So came the fruits on earth  
 Out of the ooze and dearth  
 Of waters; so came  
 Their colors, bits of flame  
 Of the rainbow, seeded and strewn  
 In the earth, to glow and be known  
 In the gold, red, purple and green  
 In fruits and harvest seen.

CII. MARY L. LORD. My dearly beloved friend these many years. Her intellectual desire is noble, and her heart as constant and as fervent as her mind. She is absolutely trusted by whosoever knows her at all. In the letter that begins this volume

I have referred several times to the long table. She always hath sat at it. For ten years and more she hath been one of the circle around it, always in her place, which is at my right hand, and barely one or two meetings absent during all the years. She listens intently, broods deeply, speaks little. Commonly her thoughts must be invited into speech; when spoken, they are wisdom and sincerity. With the constancy which marks her in all things, she was one of a small company whom I led in some studies extending over eight successive years—studies of the seven great teachers. When we had finished our study of the Parsee faith and scriptures in twenty lessons, I asked each of the company in turn what the conscious mental result was. Her answer was, "I think if I should go to Bombay and enter the Parsee temple there, I should not feel like a stranger in it, nor alien to the faith." Around the long table for one exercise I chose a sonnet of Wordsworth, reduced its substance and logic to a prose statement, then required from each one a sonnet based on that statement, and finally compared the sonnets with Wordsworth's. The Sonnet chosen from Wordsworth was the one beginning, "Where lies the land to which yon ship must go?"—XXXIII. of Part First of the Miscellaneous Sonnets. Some of the Sonnets offered had much merit either in whole or in some lines or expressions. Mary Lord's, one of the best, and very beautiful, I will give here:

Full winged, with flags appareling the air  
 The ship sets forth. The wandering bird is blest  
 With Heaven's regard; beneath what star will rest  
 Man-given wings? The ship must leave our care.  
 Yet willing winds her pinions bright upbear  
 And lapping waves touch tenderly her breast;  
 The wide horizon opes at her behest,  
 All climes her home—the sea her thoroughfare.

When holy pilgrims go their love to spend  
 On shrine of saint, though shriven by vows, they start  
 Sped by our hopes, tears on our prayer attend:  
 So now in spite of faith, with fearful heart  
 We wave adieu and wonder what the end!  
 Will joy await our days who now do part?

Of this my friend, whose bond of dear friendship unto me is equally hallowed by her character and by time, who is forever one of the most blessed and dear potencies in my life, see also Cameo XXVIII. This was written when I was leaving my ministry to the church of which she was a member. Things then she said and looked and wrote and did in those sad days, revealed her lovely heart and mind to me in ways and to dear deeps the which with all my seeing I had not seen before.

CIII. CLARA H. MAHONY. My friend hath wide nature, encompassing heart and endless devotion, with many graces; but if I must try to phrase her great gift, I should say it is radiance. Every one is happy where she is. She has friends both many and notable. One who loves her may be equally proud of what she is, what she does, and what her friends conceive of her. She is the one other (see Sonnet CII.) who during all the studies around the long table barely hath been absent from one session these many and dear years. Of this Sonnet one writes me, "She never had a better portrait. I regard it as quite wonderful that you could catch *a beauty which is action* and pen it in fixed words." The italics are mine. See also the Dedication and Cameo XXXIV.

CIV. MYRA PERKINS. Sister of Clara Mahony (CIII.) A lovely character. A woman friend of her said to me, "She is a bit of heaven." She is a musician. It is lovely rest to sit



dreamily and hear her play from Mozart. And if thereby a tired brain be lulled into a slumber, she will say it was her intention. Her intelligence is rare, quick, generous, logical; poetical, too. Her thoughts fly so that she drops one sentence to begin another—a curious and fascinating trait, which has hewed the Sonnet to itself. It never leaves her meaning obscure. For some years I have been companion with her in French reading, and those hours are rich and charming to me, full of excursions of thought and endued with potency of companionship. She hath that fine combining of powers which is so excellent both for beauty and for efficiency, namely, wisdom and devotion equal.

CV. MARY L. PERKINS. The venerable mother of Clara Mahony and Myra Perkins (CIII. CIV.) I count her consideration among the greater honors of my life. She heads with a stately but also affectionate presence a household wherein I gratefully have found always for me peace and light.

CVI. SILVANUS SMITH AND JUDITH W., husband and wife. Their home is full of thoughts. It was the dearest of all Boston homes to me, except one, (Sonnet CVII), during my ministry in that city, and since then, these many long years, has been still a home of love and of inspiring mental vitality to me whenever—now sadly long since—I could visit it. The freshness, the vigor of life, the world-wide interest, the stream of ideas in that house, make it like a sea and the breezes thereof—the ocean which they love. What sea-folk they are—ship-builders and sailors! I would trust me in any gale with them, any rage of the elements at sea or war of thoughts in cities. The Sonnet sings their golden wedding.

CVII. MATILDA GODDARD. Of this beloved, glorious, illuminating friend I will write no more here. See my "More Than Kin," pp. 204-208. Yet I would write if I could find me words as I would. For more even than my love I would like to utter fitly my marveling and my reverence. 'Tis woefully long since I have looked on that revered face, and sat within the visible glory of her love and her supreme life-lore. And yet, I am never beyond the circle of her spiritual effluence.

CVIII. LICINEA E. HILTON. "All of the personal sonnets are very beautiful, but none quite so beautiful as this"—so writes me a long-time and noble friend. A beautiful, queenly, loving woman was she whose loving-kindness wrought this Sonnet in me. I went to her brother's house, where Death had snatched suddenly two rare children, and she opened the door. Then, speaking not, she bent down from the threshold and gave me the dignity and sweetness of that bestowal. It was a decoration. I rejoice that in this Sonnet my "step is so far masterful" (as in daily walk it is) to speak of the honor as that there is no flaw of form in it, no couplet nor any such deprecation, and the line, as Milton requires, is "variously drawn out into the next." The noble, royal woman, whose strength hath bent under many sorrows, hath gone now from the region of my ken. I can see her but rarely; but still I feel that honor, that tender bestowal and high decoration, as if just now imparted. Some years afterward I wrote to her of it, and she answered with a lovely grace expressing surprise that her "so simple act" could have been so much to me. Neither now knows she nor can I show the filial love I bear her. I never can enter her presence without an emotion which partakes of religion.

CIX. M. ESTELLA AUSTIN, my secretary once, my friend always, and in both offices a power, counsel, light. She was

devout, and very brave. She deserves that I should celebrate in ways beyond me and too great for me the faithfulness and riches of her service to me, the strength of her spirit, her fine intelligence, her delicate genius for expression, her tireless industry, her loving watchfulness. All these qualities she poured around me without measure and without ceasing. Leaving me at last for other duties, she left me two great possessions, a reverential affection and a profound gratefulness; also a new force and strength withal, for she was of such quality that she was to me like the earth to Antaeus—to lean on her aid was to grow stronger. I can turn nowhither in my studies, among my notes, my books, but I find the marks of her once audible and visible counsel, now continuing to the mind's eye and ear. Her letters gave me often texts for my sermons, or fine eloquences to quote in them, and she was full of topics for discourse which she suggested continually. In a letter to me she said, "May this be a day of blessings to you, sweet content with what is." This I made the text for a sermon entitled, "At Peace with Things." She was cheer in very essence. "Let us," she wrote me once, "be too busy burnishing the moments to be concerned with coming difficulties." She is a pure quietness, seeking side seats and retirements, yet a pervasion of influence to one knowing her. See Cameos XXVI. XXVII. For many years not a page did I print without her criticism and fellow-labor thereon and her *Imprimatur*—and always to the great benefit of it; and although I am finishing this book by these notes without her participancy because she hath gone to a distance and to other cares, yet she pondered the Sonnets for me, one by one, and many times over, and with such a fine judgment and delicate sense that without her I know not whither I might have wandered; which service I now acknowledge gratefully; and this acknowledgement is no less a happiness to me than a justice to her. Whether as friend of heart or benefactor of mind or stay of will, she was a presence

of power, and her approval was equally an ample reward and an assurance of worth. Her fellowship in work and her immense service to me were of those wonders of experience which make life grand.

CX. EVA G. WANZER. Of Quaker extraction. Her presence is pure peace. She is quietness, symmetry, reasonableness, gentle justice, steadfastness, patience and love. She neglects no duty, though small, and she fears none, though great or difficult. In my church she was my untiring fellow-worker in many ways for many years. Her thoughtfulness amounts to a vast inclusion. She pours herself around whatever she undertakes. She is faith, truth and devotion. To converse with her is courage, stay, purpose. Her smile is bright and her bearing is high and warm and strong with love. Cameo XXVII.

CXI. CXII. GRACE M. CURTIS. O, lovely, noble, devout, loving woman, whose friendship unto me, like a glow in the sky unwaning for twenty years, hath been arched now over immortal seas! Never knew I more rare and delicate spirit, a heart more tender, a love more like a religion, a life more faithful amid sacred and hidden sorrows to the end. How her friends loved her! How her pupils followed her! How all persons wondered at her! She was a strenuous spirit, living a not much revealed life; when shown a little, it was like a deep of light and a soaring of flame. I have memories of her that bless me inexpressibly—great honors, dear recollection of a friend-love that knew no limits, and vouchsafements of revelation thereof that were like a bending of the heavens. She was very eloquent in thoughts. I listened, rapt, once while she described to me the office and ministry to her of one tree which she could see from her window. She worked intensely, and at last rent her delicate frame thereby and escaped. Her dress, her face, her voice, her manners

were her own and a little odd perhaps—touched with a sweet exclusiveness to her own soul—like no other's. She scouted the notion of my exchanging, and would not go to church on those occasions. It was in vain that I argued to her the duties of hospitalities, the value of another mind discoursing, etc. She answered that these points had no bearing on the question. It was not matter of hospitality nor other duties, nor of education, but of a relationship. "It is the same kind of distress to me," she said, "to see another in our pulpit, as if some one should assume my husband's place in the freedom of my house or my child's place by my side. If the angel Gabriel should come down to preach I would not let him have your place. He should have a place of his own. There I might hear him with pleasure or with patience, because without offense to a deep relationship." After she had vanished, Laura Wieser, a near friend unto me and now as near in spirit, though distant beyond ocean, and a great lover of our Grace Curtis, gave me a lovely picture of her, which long afterward became cause of the Sonnet CXII.

Here will I add memory of Laura Wieser, for to speak of the two at once is as natural as to tell of breezes and tree tops or of violets and wood banks together. That lovely German is a very flame of music and poetry, of joy in every manner of eloquence, of passion for delicate or exalted beauty, of a devout love of her friends, and of a singular reverence for any one who could do, say or think any beautiful thing. If I should sum up her manner of life in a word, I should call it rapture; and naught in her is more rapturous than her reverence. Over any intellectual or moral beauty that reverence falls in flakes, like the breaking from the atmosphere of something whiter and softer than snow and warmer than light. O! my memories of her footstep on the stairway, lighter than thoughts, yet as forecasting as they, and then of the felt presence at the door, and then the knock like a praying of forgiveness for coming, and then the

gentle voice excusing the almost as gentle tap, lest some coy sprite of thought had been startled away by the scarce audible sound! Her reverence is a lovely passion, a religion. She is utterly impatient in her own gentle, loving, forgiving way, of the popular taste for common forms and glinting shallowness, and she bewails without ceasing the neglect suffered by her heroes of pen or song or harmony. Yet not for their sakes; she would disdain to grieve much for them; but for the people so blind and deaf to what truly is beautiful.

Lovely, poetic, musical, devout twain, to whom both my soul by each is moved the more, whose reverence for any advent of beauty lifted their daily lives into a communicating fervency!

CXIII. EMERSON BLAKE BUSHNELL, my god-child in the middle name, son of Rev. Charles F. Bushnell and Margaret Dreutlein. I never have seen the child. The parents barely walked across my path beside it a little way, but left it the brighter and more sweetly and variously peopled.

CXIV. LOUISA L. WARE, daughter of William Ware and Mary Waterhouse. Of her, my friend and sister for thirty years, nay, now and ever, I must write a long, loving, grateful note; yet, howsoever long, short for what it is right and true and simply faithful that I should say of her. I remember well the first time I saw her, and her every look and motion. It took me not long to grow into a deep and reverential love of her which never has left me, having become and continued the exaltation of every faculty of me. I was a raw youth of seventeen years of age, just arrived at College, received by her lovely mother into her home. First she took me into as loving and faithful a heart as ever beat, and then she took me in hand to instruct and mold me by her experience, studies, thoughts. She was a beautiful player of the piano, with a brilliant and yet tender style. I handled the violin in those days, and we used to play to-

gether by hours daily. But she would have none of the music which was the best I had known. "Arrangements? No, forsooth. Nothing but original compositions for the instruments." So was I led into the mysterious and glorious world of the sonata music of the great masters, and chiefly we delighted together in Mozart. I had a voice then too—not great, but worth some exercise. "What! sing by rote?" said she; "O never; you must read." So she taught me how to read the notes with voice as already I could with instrument, and we, with her sister, (CXVI) used to sing old-fashioned sweet ditties, of winter evenings, or on the porch late into summer nights. Nor have I ceased to feel, as if it were but yesterday, the splendid Christmas eve when she, the lover of music, the devout, the lovely, the gentle, the cultivated and accomplished, sat with me in the College chapel while the "Venite, adoremus" rose and flooded all the spires and shadows of the "dim, religious light." At that time the love of poetry had not been born in me. I delighted in argument, speculation, logic and science. She said, "You must add the poets, else will you never be balanced and happy." Thereupon to awake me to the poets she repeated to me from memory all the first book of Cowper's "Task." I was enchanted. Straightway I obtained a little pocket volume of the poem and carried it about with me a long time, reading rapt whenever I might have a wait of a few minutes in my walks and rides. This began a new life for me which hath lost no color to this hour; no, but gained and grown rich. Then said she to me, "You know nothing of the history of art; you must learn of it." Whereupon she began to talk to me regularly daily out of the treasures of her reading, bringing me along that luminous path, from the earliest Christian art adown the centuries. She led me also to botany, and roamed fields and woods with me when strength served, which alas! was but little, and taught me to use the microscope, and she opened to me in myself a love and a knowledge of those sweet beings, the delicate wild flora, which hath

been a happy passion in me from that time. The yellow violet (*viola pubescens*) is associated with her, for I first saw it in her hands and she led me to woods' banks of it. By her rich talk, her insight, principles and life-lore, she gave me new thoughts, and tests of thought, new valuations of life and character, new measures of things, new conceptions of persons. Her being became indeed a law of my life, an influence immense, formative, endless; and unto this hour I often say to myself, on recognition of some principle, persuasion, gentle bias or happiness of me, "That is Louisa within me."

A trait of her which I must not forget to mention is her genius for nonsense. This is really a genius, and a rare one; and one, moreover, of lovely moral imports. For if, as Charles Lamb says, "he that hath no drachm of folly in his composition we may be very sure hath many pounds of much worse matter" (I quote from memory), then belike we may argue that the more of such fine nonsense as my friend's the more do gentle virtues inhabit. Her sayings and doings in that kind were original, racy, humorous, delicate, affectionate, as finely limited in prevalence as in quality, altogether delightful, and as domestic as the variable flame of a hearth-fire. Those frisks and gambols of soul are dear to my memory and not inconsistent with a special sacredness of thought and feeling wherein the mystery that hath received her hath become a garment for me.

But it was my great happiness that I was not merely a reciprocity. I could give as well as receive, though not in so many ways. In all the ways that I could I did—with my physical strength, with my tone of mind so different from her own and therefore valuable to her, and with my love; and so well did I in such ways that she said I was a constant sunshine over her life—O honor more than bay-wreaths! But most notably to myself could I and did I give to her in one great way. We were born in the same household of religious faith—a happy fact; but she belonged to an elder, supernatural branch of it,



founding in historical miracles and scriptures; and I, although having like traditions, by a certain main force, slowly, like the motion of a screw of very fine thread, had lifted me away from that condition into the pure simplicity of Natural Religion. This had been done by much and long reading, thinking, comparing, reasoning, and especially by long study of the laws of human testimony and historical evidence and of the philosophy of the narratives called miracles. In this field I was as much my beloved friend's superior as in everything else she was above me. Ah! my talks to her, my remonstrances against the mere traditions which humbly she called faith, my unceasing argument, my expositions of the breadth and glory of the Natural in Religion! So was it for many years—and I supposed all my explications and fervors of thought had availed not to my wish. But one day, one golden, glorious day, a winter day wherein the earth was covered with snow, not new, but still all clean and settled to a compacted, gleaming whiteness, I came to her presence and sat with her in an upper room, windowed southward, and flooded that morning with a sunlight so singularly resplendent—at least so it seemed to me and so I remember it—as “never was on sea or land” before. I talked awhile, and she plied her needle. Then suddenly—what I said or what tone opened the flood-gates I know not—she began to speak, with a radiance like to the sunlight, of the deeps, joy, faith and stay of simple Natural Religion. With fervor and a devout happiness she spoke. At last she said, “You have taught me, you have led me! For many years I could not understand your words, and your reasons were sealed up from me. But I never ceased to brood over your prophesyings. Suddenly all became clear; I understood, I knew, I entered into the spirit of it, and the experience was like a sudden burst of a vast light; and when so I understood, then everything was changed into a new meaning, and all life, the earth, history, all creatures and things were glorified and suffused with a new light like this splendid sun-

shine!" That was my one great gift to her—O blessed, joyful vouchsafement to me the light whereof within me "never goeth out!"

But her love! What can I say of that? Volumes, that were pure beauty. What shall I? But little. Having set forth, though in this brief manner, the nature and soul of her, I will leave reverently to conception this utmost grace and power thereof. Her sweetness, tenderness, constancy, all-womanliness, are what I can speak of least, though adoring most. And especially of my own share in that divine fire of her being, to say much were like vaunting an extreme blessedness or election of Providence unto me, of which I should be humbly and sacredly silent. Yet will I offer a few words from her letters to show not her dignifying of me, but her own womanly soul of love. After a faithfulness of more than twenty-five years she wrote: "Never fear change in me. Sooner look to see the solid granite melt without cause before your eyes. You shall be at peace in my love, and therein find rest from every trouble that I can shield you from. For have you not been my more than brother for these long years! Forget not to be patient and loving. But let no tired boy write to me in the small hours. Better never write, and when I want to see you, I can go to your books. For how like are the writings of a sincere soul to the man himself! I have heard you say many a thing that I now see printed. To have the books at my side seems like sitting by you." From another letter: "How I do wish you could have put this book with your own hands into mine, and then I could have read to you from it, looking into your eyes the while. But no, 'twas not to be. In all your work I am the one who is never to be by—I, than whom no one cares more!"

By my "work" in this letter she refers to my first books, which I had sent to her. Here gratefully and humbly I may mention her surprise and joy over those books, and especially the "Poems." She took them into mind and heart, read them, studied them

over and over and wrote me rapturous critical letters amounting in all to no little of a volume, all forsooth for love of my writings and chiefly of my songs; not for love of me, for she was critical truth itself, writing purely as she thought and felt, and—I may dare to say it, in right justice and respect unto her, even at risk of seeming to take honor to myself—she was critical knowledge and taste too, instructed by reading and study in six languages; not to be blinded or perverted by her affections. She always had viewed me only as a thinker. To express as well as argue and reason she thought was not given to me. Especially versing by me, and some early small endeavors therein, she frowned on. “*O, Beato mio,*” she said, “try not to write verse—’tis not given you; confine yourself to honest prose—’tis your nature. You can not sing—be not troubled by that fact—but accept it—write good prose and be content.” But when the “Poems” came to her hand, her heart turned to a very flame of gladness and she wrote me her letters of sacred fire. I will quote from the first one:

“The book is full of rare thoughts, clothed with a beauty of expression that I did not dream was in you—you who, I thought, had not that charm of graceful speech that makes one of the greatest attractions of poetry. \* \* \* The faults of the book, say you? Wait yet; I can not see them now. \* \* \* The whole thing has moved me so, and set astir so many memories, that I can not think quite clearly yet, but only feel. Wait yet, and you shall have more. \* \* \* And now I, who denied you the poet’s name, who gave your gentle heart than pain, I, yes I, will lovingly, reverently lay the singer’s robes upon your shoulders, and bid you be glad. I keep your poems in my heart of hearts.”

She thought me, nevertheless, too “lawless” and reproved me. She wrote:

“You know I always found fault with your lawlessness in the matter of rhyme and meter. I find specimens of this scattered through your book; but as I know that it arises from no in-

dolence, no want of care, but is entirely intentional, being a legitimate outcome of your mode of thinking and of the rules you have laid down for yourself, and moreover springs from something fresh and original, I have felt it best to let that go without comment. But you constantly trouble my sense of harmony, and as you are a master of harmony when you choose so to be, I look on it as a blemish."

I have altered my mind and practice on that point (as perhaps I have said sufficiently in the Letter that begins this volume), and think now my noble friend was right and saw more clearly than I did. It were joyful, if this book might rest in "the touch of a vanished hand," to hear from her that no longer I was offending the delicacy of her ear.

Of one more point it is a right gratefulness to her that I should speak, namely, her view of my love songs. And if this I can not do without wearing another decoration from her, conceive, I pray you, how right and due and no more than respectful it is that humbly and obediently I should let her, the sincere and sufficient spirit, honor me if she will. She wrote, "The love poems are beautiful. Their tone is sublimated. They sing of such purity of thought that they are entrancing. Singing of love, you tread the upper regions till the love seems almost divorced from the person loved, and is in your being but a higher presence. But let this be—it is better so. It is the most delicate love-poetry I ever read, and therefore stands alone among the utterances of that feeling. Let it be so."

And again, after reading a criticism of the book saying that the love poems were "sometimes cold," she wrote, "In a previous letter I have spoken of the peculiar character of your poetry of love. It is so *somewhat*, so, as the critic says, 'sometimes cold;' but on this head do not mind what the critics say. No one ever wrote such love poetry as yours. Love has been vulgarized, even in the hands of our best writers. And here you come, with thoughts equal to the best of them, and raise it

into the region of refined, exalted feeling which will exert a most beneficent influence. Go on in your own way and write as you have done on this theme at least."

With this precious benediction—which now comes to me, in reading these letters, like her hand laid on my head, reaching down thereto from another sphere—I will end my confidences to you (as much as I could find heart to impart them) of what she was to me and said to me. *It all plures*, October 2, 1890.

I will add two delicate stanzas by her which have clung to my memory. She spoke to me once of the exceeding painfulness of losing a thought, which, having visited the mind, escapes, and leaves a mindfulness that some thought was there which can not be gotten again. The pain, she said, was like that of a loneliness arising from the loss of very substance of ourselves. Afterward she gave me these verses, expressing this sentiment:

Two little birds were telling  
 Their loves in a leafy tree;  
 Two little clouds were sailing  
 Over a summer sea.

I looked—the clouds had vanished,  
 The birds far off had flown;  
 My rising thought was banished,  
 And I was left—alone.

This sonnet refers to a request from her. I had sent her a writing of mine, the book named "St. Solifer," wherein occurs a thought touching death. She wrote me that she desired me to make a sonnet of that thought; but she had vanished before I did so. The thought she desired versed was this: "Death is but the superscription of the unfinished and signifies that the same has gone on to be finished." This is treated in the next Sonnet, CXV. The fifth line of this Sonnet (CXIV) is measured thus:

♩ | ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♩ | ♪ ♪ ♩ | ♪ ♪ ♩ | ♪ ♪ ♩ ||

I will add a song that I wrote to her long ago, for a New Year day. I had forgotten it, but came on it lately among my manuscripts:

O bright New Year,  
Now you are here  
I can impart to you my mind:  
I pray you to my friend be very kind,  
And give her cheer.

She is the best  
I know—and lest  
Her gentle place you should not find,  
I pray you to my friend be very kind  
For my request.

So brief you last,  
So quick and fast  
You do betake yourself along,  
You can not pick my pearl from all the throng  
Ere you be past.

So I must tell—  
And listen well,  
That fondly you may find her out—  
What traits and looks she sweetly bears about  
Her like a spell.

Deep in her face  
Mark well and trace  
A splendor of a pattern rare,  
A countenance where love, thought, pain and care  
Lend beauty grace.

Brown golden hair,  
With sun-touch fair,  
Clusters about an even brow:  
Her eye is fire, then laughing, brimming now  
With dew love-rare.

And with all these,  
 As true eye sees,  
 Dwelleth a strength that gives not o'er;  
 She can protect, and in her true heart store,  
 As well as please.

O bright New Year,  
 Say, do you hear  
 All these, my signs? Then onward go,  
 On her your sweetest sunshine fall, and blow  
 Your breezes clear.

Bid gentle night  
 Be starry bright  
 About her when the sun is low,  
 And fold her in sweet sleep until the glow  
 Of morning light.

Let sun and shade  
 Compact be made  
 Upon her head descend to rest,  
 And fill with tempered beams her loving breast,  
 And never fade.

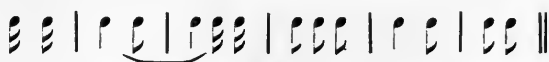
She is so dear,  
 To me so dear,  
 You must be good to her, New Year.

CXV. The following is the complete text of the thought which my friend asked me (See Note, CXIV.) to verse: "Who knows, exclaims he, that the Creator has yet ended any of these lower creatures? For they may go on and improve and unfold hereafter—yea, even unto angels and archangels. For, he says (and I know not where perhaps anything finer has been said of death), death is but the concomitant of forms varying and imperfect; for if instantly the creature of God had been created finished and perfect, he would have been unchangeable, and there would have been no death. Therefore, death is but the superscription of the unfinished, and signifies that the same has gone

on to be finished.”—St. Solifer, p. 78. The first line of this sonnet is measured thus:



The thirteenth line has thirteen syllables, but nevertheless fills exactly the five measures of time. It is to be read with a syncopated movement at one place and with a measure of three syllables, thus:



For a new race unto perfectness, fiery smitten.

If the reader will see another and very beautiful line of thirteen syllables in five measures of time, treated with a rest at the third measure, you will find it in “Merchant of Venice,” Act 1, Scene 3, in Shylock’s speech, beginning, “O Father Abram!”

CXVI. MARY H. WARE, sister of Louisa L. (CXIV). I have written no verse that is a more truthful portrait. She is a most devout heart of love and faithfulness, a mind widely stored, and a remarkable manner of wit well known to her near friends, wherein she gleams suddenly out of the soft shadows and silences of her thoughts. She says things so happily conceived or so tersely shaped or so perfectly expressed or so quaintly humorous, that they affect the memory like a stamp on wax—a clear and finely cut device which commands the eye and remains fixed also in its medium. She is an artist whose fancies done with the brush are very delicately beautiful. She is a great lover of the poets, and hath a strain of verse in her own soul, warm with love. After a never-to-be-forgotten visit of me to the sisters at Rindge, N. H., one beautiful summer—a precious three weeks of beauty and loving fellowship—when I had gone, Mary sent after me this song:



## SONG OF THE BROOK.

TO J. V. B.

In the quiet vale below  
 The busy mill-wheel turneth;  
 Out of the silent wood  
 The merry brook still runneth—  
 Runneth the whole day long,  
 Singing a low, sweet song,  
 Of one who has come and gone, gone,  
     Of one who has come and gone.

All through the winter wild,  
 While heavily falls the snow,  
 The patient toilers bide  
 In the quiet vale below.  
 And safe in their icy bed  
 The merry waters play,  
 "Singing the same sweet song  
 They sang on that summer day,"  
 Of one who had come and gone, gone,  
     Of one who had come and gone.

I sit by my winter fire.  
 I watch the murmuring flame,  
 That tells of the silent forest  
 Whence the mighty oak tree came.  
 And I seem to catch the message  
 That it fain would strive to say,  
 Of the merry brook that flows,  
 Flows forever and aye.  
 And still as it flows along  
 "It singeth the same sweet song  
 It sang on that summer day,"  
 Of one who had come and gone, gone,  
     Who has gone, but not for aye.

CXVII. M. EMMA POWERS. We disagree much, but still more we are true friends. She is absolute faithfulness. We write little. No matter. If we met not nor wrote for five hundred years, I should find her the same. My dear friend, over whose

worth and dearness to me a quarter of a century has spread its sky, I pray you be not ill-pleased with me for my Sonnet which yet you have never seen. I think you would forbid me to print it, or anything else, if I should ask leave. Therefore I will not ask leave. Besides, good sooth, I am no little wroth with you for not being more peaceable with what I love so much, to-wit, yourself. I would have you to know that my election always hath fallen on riches; or if not always, yet I insist on a fair frequency worthy of some reputation with you. I can find no fault with your choice of me in friendship—a high honor to me, and as undeviating for me as the sun in the heavens; but I would have you more tender to your friend's friend, I mean yourself. And I will tell you that twice and thrice and many times even unto this moment I have assuaged a weary thirst at the fountain of your religious spirit.

CXVIII. KATHARINE L. HALPIN—when her twin boys were born. The mother it has not been my fortune to know much, albeit very pleasantly and cheerfully, and once sacredly and sorrowfully for ministry when her first-born “went to the majority.” But the father hath been my dear and fast friend for many years of remarkable association and companionship, now somewhat broken into by conditions adverse, but ever potentially the same and luminous in memory. Those were happy times, friend, when many and long talks we had in your office, or when I haunted your work-room, coat off, days at a time, busy with you and your workmen in the little art-works we have essayed together. Never-to-be-forgotten times! And many helps by them kept in my memory with tenderest gratefulness! A manly man is my friend, and of a fine intelligence and fine feeling, and a soul of natural religion, and a brave thinker. He was impatient that my books, printed by him, met so little favor. “Write me some sketches,” said he, “and I will issue them at my own wish and cost and try the public with them.” And so I did;

and so he presented me with "St. Solifer." For his sake I have done what never for myself I did; I mean I have grieved that the book fared no better than the others.

Some engaging Sonnets hath this, my friend, Thomas P. Halpin, composed and sent to me. I will give here one lately received from him—a beautiful Sonnet, with a peculiar charm to my mind:

Dear one, to thee mayhap it is a grief  
That irresponsible beats thy tender heart.  
Unwillingly unloving then thou art,  
And kind with thy reluctance to belief.  
Of all love's worth, the power to love is chief.  
Fair thou art made and canst inflict that smart,  
Unanswer'd love, while robbed of love's best part.  
Oh, riches filched, and cruel fate the thief!  
Thou'rt so bereft that less my double loss,  
Thy love, my hope, wherein I lose thee twice;  
For hope 's foregone—it singeth not a morrow!  
Yet love that hangs on answering love is dross  
Offered for gold! Oh, I will love thee thrice:  
For thy sweet self, thy fruitless will, thy sorrow.

CXIX. ALICE L. TAYLOR. Dost remember, thou dear, true friend of twenty years, that I never ceased to possess, hung on the walls of memory, the picture of thee in my first glimpse of thee? How little we have met during these many years! Yet what friends we have been! And at first, yea, and for long, I knew thee not in the riches of thy heart. But one memorable day when I visited you, I made some remark on the nature of love in friendship, and you answered quietly, "Yes, so is it between us two"—dost remember? And I looked at you with a wide surprise, and instantly knew both your fine grace and my well loving of you, which hath continued, and will; for I yield not even to you in point of constancy. And your letters—not many but heart-rich and mind-full! And your fresh spray of quotations from your stores of poesy-lore! And all these from the beginning, and now time hallowing them!

Line nine is measured thus:



CXX, CXXI. To what I have said in the notes to the public volume I will add only that I love dogs dearly, and I re-print this *In Memoriam*, April, 1885:

All friends everywhere, especially pairs of friends who are closely united and have great joy in their mutual trust and affection, I apprise that I have just lost a friend. I loved him, and he deserved it. He loved me, and I hope I deserved it, though I have never thought I was as worthy for my advantages as he for his, for my friend was of a humbler station than I. Nevertheless we were much together. Such was his love and such his reverence for my stronger intelligence that simply to be near me seemed a dear satisfaction to him. And such was my well-deserved affection and my reverence for his goodness and devotion, that I worked the better during long hours by day, or more often by night, for his quiet companionship in my study. Long and bright and communicative were the walks we had together. In body he was the stronger, swifter, more supple, and I used to watch with exhilaration, even when I could not share, the physical ecstasy of his existence. I had a little girl, a sweet, tender, winsome child, who died before my friend. During her short life he was much with her, and took much devoted care of her. His name was the only one she ever learned to speak. She used to utter it with evident pleasure, though she never acquired a filial syllable. It was beautiful to see his large, strong, protecting presence with the little, spiritual, slowly-vanishing child. And now both are gone. He was found dead one morning, lying apparently in all the pride of his strength and beauty, as if he had simply fallen painlessly asleep. Shall I ever meet him again? I have strong faith in it. Surely he and we are as well worth preserving as the twelve basketsful

of fragments picked up that there might be no waste. Meantime, his memory is warm, dear, beautiful,—altogether as lovely as pure fidelity, a generous disposition, intelligence without ambition and delicate manners could make recollection. He was impeded in his speech, not dumb, yet not quite articulate; but his efforts to speak were touching, pathetic, and very expressive. His name was Bruce.

Line 11, CXX, is measured thus:



CXXIII. FREDERICK L. HOSMER. See the public Notes. My classmate at College, and my friend. A character of singular sweetness, firmness, prudence, courage—a being made up of admirable balances covered all over with a rare taste and a lovely refinement. He hath also as fine, delicate and quaint humor as any I know, which sparkles in his talk and in his letters and often gives to his smile a peculiar charm. Here follows a Christmas Hymn or carol by him, of beautiful quality and marked with the admirable, perfect finish of all his metrical composition:

#### DISCIPLESHIP.

On the Judæan hills  
 Would I have seen the light  
 The watching shepherds saw,  
 Turning to noon the night?  
 Would I have seen the star  
 That new in heaven shone,  
 And followed with the few  
 The new-born Christ to own?

And if mine ears had heard  
 The Man of Galilee  
 Speaking from heart aflame  
 The Truth that maketh free,  
 Turning from priest and scribe,  
 Dead rite, and parchment roll,—  
 Would I have hailed in him  
 A Prophet of the Soul?

Those words upon the mount,  
 By way sides, in the town,—  
 Unwelcome to his time,  
 Now Holy Scripture grown,—  
 Would I have read in them  
 A message from on high,  
 Or joined the multitude  
 Who cried out Crucify?

Ah, vain for you or me  
 To question thus the Past!  
 Not then but now for us  
 The fateful choice is cast;  
 Ever the larger faith  
 Makes way 'mid doubt and scorn,  
 And in its latest word  
 Anew the Christ is born.

The true disciples they,  
 The wide earth o'er, who own  
 Truth in her manger low,  
 Ere yet she mounts the throne:  
 Who from the dead Christ's tomb  
 Take not the stones to slay  
 In blinded fear and rage  
 The living Christ to-day.

They hear the angels' song,  
 'Tis they who see the light  
 The watching shepherds saw  
 Making the heavens bright:  
 They see the self-same star  
 O'er Bethlehem that shone,  
 And follow joyful forth  
 The new-born Christ to own.

—Christmas, 1888.

On receipt of this fine hymn I wrote my friend thus:

Dear Hosmer, if to thee  
 I may a greeting send,  
 And let my song of love

With thine own rhythms blend,  
 And then may write thee these two longer lines—  
 Image of how thy song far in me shines,—

Why, so I will! And first,  
 I bless thee for thy hymn,  
 As pure an advent song  
 As seraph chants did brim  
 That morn; for that the only Christmas lay  
 Which sings that Christ not came but comes alway.

And next I bless thee, friend,  
 For thine own self, with joy;  
 More than thy verse, thyself  
 Dost all my verse employ.  
 For though so rare and rich thy numbers roll,  
 Thy sweetest poem, comrade, is thy soul.

#### One other Christmas greeting:

Dear Hosmer, often I rehearse  
 Unto myself thy goodness, worth;  
 But could I write it in a verse  
 Worthy to be observed by one  
 Who, like thee, makes words music, then  
 I would proclaim it round the earth  
 Till known to all the busy men  
 Who walk beneath this Christmas sun.  
 But as such verse I can not write,  
 Or dip my stile in such a light,  
 I can but whisper in thine ear  
 That thou art good, my comrade dear;  
 And having said, silence again  
 Shall shield thee from my pen.

CXXIV. <sup>1</sup>MARTHA T. WELCH. Like no one else—only her own self. A perfect quietness, and yet somehow *glowing*, like a deep water with high noon over it. This glow surrounded me with a light till this Sonnet was illumined, whereby I drew it forth from its hiding place.

CXXV. EMMA H. ROCHE. A spirit with an immense hold on life, a certain passionate *livingness*, if so I may express it, which embraces not merely *this* life and *another* life, not earth and heaven, but life itself, by a fervor which is part love and part thought. I could not but sing the kind incident which the Sonnet records quite literally.

CXXVI. FREDERICK C. WILSON—a fine and intellectual and devout young spirit. To his mother, a character of firm, noble, religious texture, beloved and honored of all who know her, I offered reverently the *In Memoriam* songs that follow:

# MEMOREM ME DICES.

## I.

O precious inmate of my heart,  
My lad, my son, my gentle one,  
Thou hadst one only mortal part,  
But two immortal; which do run  
A race celestial never to be done.

Thy mortal part—I saw it die;  
I heard a knell, the temple fell,  
And at my feet did ruins lie  
In broken beauty; and did swell  
My heart with woe of love no voice can tell.

Of thy immortal souls the first  
Doth live in me, and give to me  
Such power that pain may do his worst  
And can not slay me: life of thee  
And bliss of thee make heaven of memory.

Immortal, next, thou fliest abroad  
Unmoored from place, and leav'st no trace;  
But all the infinite of God  
Giveth thee freedom; that thy face  
Now looks on me from every star of space.



And so, thou precious of my heart,  
 A sweet farewell! It is no knell,  
 This song, that follows where thou art  
 Veiled from my vision; there's a bell  
 Up in my heart-tower ringing, All is well!

## II.

EVER! and NEVER!  
 What words have rung, to tie or sever,  
 Within a love-task'd human soul,  
 Like these that o'er my spirit roll  
 From thee, beloved—thy EVER

And NEVER! I can not see  
 Thy precious form; nor voice of thee  
 My ear can hold; I can not wind  
 Thee in my arms; nor hands can find  
 Where thy hands be: All this for me

Comes NEVER! But in me be  
 Thy presences; the heart of thee  
 Lives in my heart; in me is shrined  
 Thy gentle soul; still doth my mind  
 Commune with thee: All this for me

Comes EVER! In thy brief stage  
 Being perfected thou lived'st an age;  
 Therefore 'tis love as long as pure  
 That binds me thee with bonds that dure  
 EVER, and parting do presage

NEVER! Thy soul doth wake  
 With living thoughts where light doth break;  
 For things of beauty thou didst choose,  
 And them in guiles of self didst lose  
 NEVER, but loved'st for their own sake

EVER! Thence more nor ever  
 Rang words of life, to tie or sever,  
 Nor meaning bore unto my soul,  
 Nor did from thee, my loved one, roll  
 Through me, like these—thy NEVER,  
 And EVER!

CXXVII. FRANK A. WAIT. A gentle, manly, home-loving and home-binding soul of young manhood, the stay alike of wife and of mother, "two households."

CXXXVII, CXXXVIII, CXXXIX. A sequence.

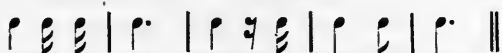
CXXXVIII. Line 12 is measured thus:



CXLI. The eighth line originally was, "My one particular important hat;" and I must own that in that particular place I part with it with regret, and am not sure by any means that what I have substituted is better.

CXLVI. Written at the time of the first threatening break in the splendid roll of my days of supple health and strength and unbroken work.

CXLIX. Line 12 is measured thus:



## THE CAMEOS.

XXIII. BERTHA T. LEWIS—a dear young friend and member of my congregation, who hath blessed my house by being much in it. She hath a winsome and bright enthusiasm and intellectual desires which give her a comrade-quality even for me who am so much her senior. Happy and prized memories invest her in my mind—memories of frolics and wheel-rides and serious talk. See note on Sonnets XCII and XCIII. Sister to Marion, Cameos XLV, XLVI.

XXIV. MINNIE C. HUGHES. Of all the dear and noble friends of whom I have written, this one alone I never have seen. She read one of my books (*More than Kin*) and then wrote me a brief, quaint letter asking for some friendship and saying that a common friend had told her I was not hard to come to. Thence has ensued a correspondence which is one of the riches of my life. Her letters are very beautiful, and full of a certain frank and lovely pervasion which plainly is her very self and honest being. She is also a lover of Nature and looks about her with a heart-full eye. Wherefore, her letters are full of touches like the following: "The mists roll back from the bay just as we turn from it, but the sun is still wrapped in its sheet and playing at ghost." "And here [writing from a tropical place] the flowers, the flowers! Can I take them close enough to my soul? Rich, delicate, profuse, I revel in their tints and perfume. I pluck a whole heart-full from every garden I pass." "There will be a time when I can talk to thee, and I await it. For now I must be content to send thee simple greetings from the soft air, the flowers and the sunshine. The blessings of their being be with thee." "The West, too, held its burden of delight; for there behind the Olympics the great, glorious sun was sinking down so heavily it seemed to pull the skies in after it. Oh! it is strange to believe but good to know that there are other scenes as fair as ours." "There was a delightful lesson for me yesterday. In the midst of our garden of roses a lady nearly eighty years of age handed me a bouquet of wild grasses." "The full glare of day, this after all seems scarcely a more true light than the sweet shadows of the evening or of a distance." But not by any excerpts can I convey the charm of her letters; for their charm is not beauties so much as beauty, a lovely effluence of joined heart and mind. She hath favored me with some songs, "true and unfeigned verse," from her pen—of which I will give one here:

## MY TALISMAN.

Golden curls all tossed awry,  
 Rosy cheeks where dimples lie,  
 Eyes so like an April sky,  
   My talisman!

Cares and trials, sorrow, pain,  
 Flaunt their ensigns all in vain;  
 Here's the charm to rend their chain—  
   My talisman!

Let them siege me like the rest;  
 Calm, unmoved I bear the test,  
 While I clasp you to my breast,  
   My talisman!

‘Should I lose you’—Softly, stay!  
 See—I'll weave our souls this way;  
 Now not death can wrest away  
   My talisman!

XXV. BELLE G. SCRIBNER. A descriptive stanza. No more than the truth, nay, not so much—whether it be of the beauty of her faithful spirit, or of her kind and brave brown eyes joined with her soft and shining blonde hair—a very unusual and lovely combination of features, and very significant; for it betokens great sweetness united with a firm will, and both combined into a rich loyalty, constancy and faithfulness. When sadly I left the pulpit dear to me for many long and full years, she wrote me a letter of kind and affectionate recollection for which my soul thanks her always.

XXVI. ANNA W. EDWARDS. I write of her for three traits that move eye, and ear and thought toward her: She is a very Muse of dancing, moving with a light and fine grace; she hath dark, luminous auburn tresses, abundant and very beautiful; and she inhabits a stillness which ariseth from a domestic heart and from a certain excellent poise of mind. She moves promptly

for service in emergency, but as softly as a shadow. Noise avoids her. Feeling may tremble quickly in tone or tear, but there-with she has a quality to confer rest.

XXVII. EVA G. WANZER. See Note to Sonnet CX. The Cameo had origin when first I met her after ceasing to be her minister.

XXVIII. MARY L. LORD. Like Cameo XXVII, this arose from the church parting. What revelations partings and divers manners of sad changes are! How they uncover heroisms and devotions! See Sonnet CII, and note thereon.

XXIX. My girls, my friends, my playmates. At end of a sportive and happy summer, one went away, back to her work at a distance. See Sonnets XCII, XCIII, and note thereon.

XXX. VIRGINIA S. BRANNON. She hath such a face and soul wherewith to convey her listening that to speak in her presence is a happy accepting of aid and inspiration. She was one of a group (Cameos XXXI, XXXII, XXXIII, XXXIV) who went with me one glorious Autumn Sunday when, having left during the Summer the church they belonged to, I resumed my service of a little church in a suburb of this great city. Ah! what a day!—an endearing day, and memorable also for mental communion. No one of them knew nor all together could dream the blessedness and power unto me of their presence that day. And not least, nor ever little, to me thy presence, my friend; and thy epistle of parting is treasured.

XXXI. MINNIE C. REUTER. This is to be understood in light of all these five Cameos, XXX—XXXIV. This my friend hath given me much company a-wheel also, and especially during one summer she, with another (Cameo XXX) was with me often in enchanting night rides memorable. She listened to me many

years with that manner of listening which confers hope on the speaker that he saith not all amiss. Happy and rich memories cling about her in my thoughts, and I own me her true debtor, both for long helpfulness from her earnest spirit and for her presence on that glorious first Sunday when Heaven seemed to empty upon the earth.

XXXII. ANNA H. BREGGER. A true, dear friend. Admirable, lovely as woman, as wife, as mother. Her presence blessed that great Sunday. She came but late into my life, but her husband dates for me afar back. We are "old friends" now. He is much my junior; but I never think of it; I meet him with all the reverence due to an equal whose excellencies beyond me my soul acknowledges with joy—"one of Nature's noblemen," whose love is an honor and as steadfast as the heavens. Their simple home is "sweetness and light."

XXXIII. ALICE HAYWARD. Present on that glowing Sunday, and her presence a power both of help and of happiness. The Cameo describes her—I need add naught. 'Tis plain I owe her much. One year after the burning of our church and the utter destruction of its grand organ, she wrote me a letter referring to our loss and then to my withdrawal from that pulpit, and inclosing a Sonnet written at the anniversary of the fire. I will quote from the letter and give the Sonnet, for I cannot better show the character of my friend. She says: "Evolved out of deep, sad feeling is the Sonnet which I have written and now enclose. I ask your pardon for the many imperfections it has, trusting you to understand just the circumstances and occasion of the writing of it. It is, in first error, too much in narrative style. That might be justified in part by a certain time tone all through it. I have tried to be impersonal, acting on the principle that the highest beauty is to get a thing implied. In using the word 'reigned' I had in mind the idea of elevation and

ascendency, to the complete exclusion of the idea of domination. And so I dare to offer it to you, asking pardon for its faults, but sturdily asserting, though sorrowfully, the thought which occasioned it." Inclosed was the following lovely and touching Sonnet:

IN MEMORIAM.

"We live in deeds, not years," the poet said;  
 And gently came a whisper ever new—  
 "Not what we did but what we strove to do."  
 Yet time leaves traces. Sadly backward led  
 In thought, we rue one autumn day whose red  
 No color-glory wrought; but fiend-like through  
 A hallowed place it strode, and tramped from view  
 The home a few revered, with searing tread.  
 The snow-time came, and then th' awakening spring,  
 And though the house was gone, the life remained:  
 But ere the summer passed, a greater grief  
 Than loss of home or organ-tone could bring  
 Befell that life. We grope for *thought that reigned*,  
 In vain. The color's gone from heart and leaf.  
 October 25, 1896.

XXXIV. CLARA H. MAHONY—in the group of that endeared and memorable Sunday. See Sonnet CIII and note.

XXXV. LOUISE W. RUSSELL. Younger than most of the friends whom my song elects, but a very womanly nature and sweet presence, whose gentle truthfulness, especially in some accents of voice that I have heard, stirred these lines in me. And here I will refer to her parents who have been truth in friendship. Especially her father, Francis C. Russell, a notable student and thinker in philosophy and mathematics, and a lover of poesy, and a religious soul, hath endowed me with conversations which remain perennial light and joy to me. He is enthusiastic for the wheel. What long, ambling rides and long, thoughtful converse therewith we have had!

XXXVI, XXXVII. See Sonnet CIX, and note.

XXXVIII. **JENNIE EDWARDS.** These lines arose from a very gentle loving kindness of her. I had visited the school where she taught and had sought and seen other friends there, but had overlooked her schoolroom—and was sorry when I bethought me afterward of the over-sight—and met her soon afterward doubtfully, fearing a reproving or slighted look. But she was a sweet, simple grace and sincere kindness and in answer to my expression of regret she said only, "Then still I wait." Manner and words together were an eloquence that seized and enraptured me. Sister of Anna, Cameo XXVI.

XLI, XLII. **KATHERINE E. TULEY**, wife of Hon. Judge Tuley, a jurist of very honorable station and authority. Mrs. Tuley hath made her goodness and grace one of the great honors and rewards of my life. I met her first in an epistle which most kindly she wrote me about one of my books "More than Kin," and I was blessed exceedingly. Some time afterward she wrote me another letter about the same book, and then, after a little, a young friend of us both took me to see her in the home which her spiritual being pervades. Unto me it was a memorable visit, and others since then like unto it, with which I have been privileged; yea, and other letters full of the strength, the beauties, the joys, the exaltations, inspirations, which such a soul hath quality to bestow. These be forces which none know her without perceiving, for which, given unto me, affection and gratefulness arise reverently. I would I might quote from the beauty of her letters, but they concern me too nearly. Of XLII, see public note.

XLIII. **ALICE D. WILEY.** My words tell the truth of her. She so shows the soul a-wing for every goodness and beauty that we "thank God such things exist." I have many brave and



glowing letters from her, full of thoughts and feelings that burn their way aloft; from one of which letters I will quote a tender Sonnet she wrote on leaving a little low cottage that had been her home many years:

This low, small roof where we have lived so long,  
 How stored with memories! Have I said, "A den,  
 Crowded, and wintry cold?" I add, But then  
 How snow-flakes blossom! How in summer throng  
 The bees to pilfer poppies! How through the song  
 Of my canary wind harps! Robin, wren,  
 Breathe Nature's prayer to tree-tops' low Amen!  
 And strength hath come to turn from grief and wrong! —  
 Yea, to do daily duties none may spare,  
 To see the harvest of the soul grow fair,  
 To walk with friends beloved, all unaware  
 How near the message calling them outside  
 Of our small lives. O Love, which must abide,  
 This roof we leave thou hast full sanctified!

XLIV. JULIA M. E. HINTERMIESTER. O devout spirit, what power to lift and to enlarge and to bless thou art! And though thou speakest often, and to purpose, yet art thou so still with the Spirit that one may say thou art "silent in five languages," the English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, which thou writest and speakest. Dost remember a walk thou tookest me round about, to see "a very rich tree," arrived at which thou saidst, "Behold a tree so rich as to have two oriole's nests—one were much, but a tree so rich as to have two!"—dost remember? I do—nor shall forget.

XLV, XLVI. MARION M. LEWIS. Sister of Bertha, Cameo XXIII. Her delicate beauty, warm in color, and very gentle and thought-full, always hath been a charm to my eyes, but never more lovely than on the Norwegian evening—a picturesque party at her home wherein her mother read a narrative of her travels

in Norway, illustrated with fine pictures, and Marion, with other young girls, dressed in the peasant costumes of Norway, served the company a purely Norwegian repast. Then knocked the Cameo, XLV, at the door of my fancy. I sent it to her unsigned, but she guessed the source, and sent me the following:

Oh, happy me, so blessed to be  
 That I among my friends  
 Remember one, Apollo's son,  
 Who such a tribute sends  
 To beauty's shrine! O, not to mine;  
 For wisdom telleth me,  
 That the beholder's eye contains  
 The beauty he may see.

On receipt of this, the music of her seized me again and I wrote Cameo XLVI; but sent it not—she first will see it in this book.

XLVII. GEORGINE MAHONY. A dear and heart-waking girl, very generous, very brave, full of a fine kind of life, and rich in humorous, contagious spirit. Daughter of Clara H. ——— Sonnet CIII, Cameo XXXIV. Her birthday came, and I knew it not and reproached her for my being left untold; she answered, "Would you have written me a poem?" This touched me much. Hence the Cameo, which I offer affectionately, wishing it were more.

XLVIII. AGNES C. MONTGOMERY. A near and dear friend for twenty full years. I know not around whom have gathered things needing more strength and wisdom; and she hath been strong and wise and brave. I remember quoting to her once Emerson's words (from memory), "The highest compact one can make with his comrade is, Let there be truth between us twain forevermore." She seized on it; and there hath been truth,

and entire mutual trust; which humbly I hope to deserve more, as she always hath deserved.

XLIX. EVA F. DAVIS. My faithful, true friend these many years, as witness many letters, posies of wild-flowers, and such thoughtfulness in other ways as is the tribute of a true and fine heart; nor less true is my friendship to her, though I cannot recall that I have had grace to make it so useful and happy to her as she hath done for me. I never think of her without a flush of reverence which is a spiritual sustenance unto me; for she hath been heavenly wealthy in the pure devotion of her life and in her intellectual fervor, also. She reads much and hath had the habit of recording and copying, neatly and carefully in a considerable book, passages in her reading which seized on her mind. When the book was full and finished, she gave it to me. What a gift! A treasure-book of so rare a kind as to be filled as much with herself as with the fine sayings she hath collected.

JOSEPH HENRY ALLEN, D. D. See Note on Sonnet XXXVI. Since that note was written, this simple-grand, child-hearted, man-hearted, venerable and noble scholar *iii ad plures*—March 20, 1898. For many years I have loved him for the simple-grand heart and soul that he was, and revered him as *facile princeps* among those elder scholars of our Household of Faith in this country who were an ancient and honorable guild of wide and large learning as apart from the merely textual or technical. That guild may be said to have ended among us with him. He was a noble and enlarged example of that illustrious fellowship of thought and letters. But ample as his learning was, and noble example of the dignity of letters as he was, he was far more than scholar. He was a man, whose heart throbbed with every interest of humanity. And withal so simple, so large of spirit, so nobly respectful of everyone, so endearing (if I may be bold

to use such a term of such a man—I do it reverently) that all might approach him easily, none debarred that presence equally genial, admonitory, instructive. The precious visits with which he has honored me! The walks and rides! And therein the converse! What riches! Sometimes they were glorious monologues into which some chance observation would lead him, to which I listened as one walks in sunlight, a recipient of what one can return in no other way than by receiving gladly. Not long before he “joined the choir invisible,” he wrote me a letter to tell me that he held my humble work as a minister to be “the kind of success which most honors a man”—words which from him might be the prize before a life’s endeavor, and the reward after it. Since the mystery and sanctity of what we call Death now inhabits the sky of my love and reverence unto him, grant me, I pray you, that it is not amiss that I have quoted the above words wherein he hath re-enforced me both unto labor and unto cheer of heart.

HAZEN J. BURTON. Though no verse hath visited me to make occasion for this note, yet I can not end my book without speaking of this, my friend, to you all, as I have spoken of you to him herein. He is a man of large, generous affairs, great scope of skill, energy and judgment, and noble mercantile success. But this is but small mention of him. His great nobility of success is in the nature of soul and mind, the largeness and height of moral and spiritual life, the estimation of mental, ethical and ideal values, which his great cares and business have left undimmed in him, nay, advanced and exalted. Happy were it for all our cities if we had a race of large merchants like to him. One beautiful sunny Sunday, never to be forgotten nor its impression of it to fade from me, he gave me his company in a long walk in this city; and what things he said! What thoughts of ideals he uttered! What purposes of life he set forth!

But not only admiration for the general, but gratefulness and love for myself I owe him, and pay in heart; as you will know well when I say that out of my ten books four would have had no existence but for him; and he hath come to my aid in this one also with resources which I had not. One book, "More than Kin," I wrote on purpose to apply worthily of him, if I could, some means that unexpectedly he placed in my hands for any literary work I chose to do. I had no time, as my duties were, to do justice to his generous aid in the ordinary course of my work. Therefore I arose an hour earlier every day for a year, and so in the fresh mornings wrote the book. I would it might express to him better the good he hath done me every way, and not least by the beauty of his manhood.











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